HOME LIFE IN NORWAY

H. K. DANIELS



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OLD, AND NEW NORWAY

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BY

H. K. DANIELS

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

IN order to obtain a general idea of the status of the peoples dealt with in these pages, the following notes should be kept in mind.

The Norwegians are a yeoman race, without an aristocracy or nobility; and therein is the main difference between them and the Swedes. There are, broadly considered, two classes in the country, with a very distinct line of cleavage, viz., the *Bymand*, or townsman, and the *Bonde*, or peasant. The *Bymænd*, consisting in the main of merchants, shopkeepers, and their dependent workers, inhabit the coastal towns—the habitat of the fishermen—and a few inland centres, and the *Bönder*, either as sea *Bönder* or land *Bönder*, practically people the rest of the country. The *Godseier* class, corresponding to our landed and leisured gentry, are not very numerous, nor, with some few exceptions, particularly affluent; wherefore have I taken the liberty of conferring on the more substantial Herr Grosserer, or merchant, seniority of place among the productive assets of his country.

The *Husmand* and the *Pladsmand* are of the

Bonde caste, and are more or less dependent on its suffrages. The former is provided by the *Godseier*, or a *Bonde* farmer, with house, fuel, and a patch of land in return for certain free services, which may, by agreement, extend over a stated period of years, or a lifetime. The *Pladsmand* owns his house, but not his plot of land, and he constitutes a class from which the farm labourer is drawn for service on the *gaard*, or farm, of the *Bonde*, or the *Godseier*, or for other general work.

But to the peasant anyone hailing from a town is a *Bymand*, in the same way that the latter dubs all and sundry *Bonde* who dwell beyond the radius of his suburbs. To the south of Christiania centuries of contact with neighbouring Denmark, Holland, Germany, and Sweden have produced a race and cult with a greater affinity to those countries than the Norwegians to the north of Christiania. The latter are a taller, stronger, and hardier breed, and more in keeping with our conceptions of the original Viking of the Sagas. Yet north or south, east or west, the Norwegian townsman and peasant are very much akin, and of characteristics peculiar to their country. Their notorious lack of cohesion in local matters and their love of litigation is only equalled by their wonderful unanimity should any great national

crisis arise. Their honesty is proverbial, and even the peasant's written or spoken word is his bond. The latter may have his faults—always assuming that they *are* faults from our point of view (who have so many virtues to spare), but he will never acknowledge them : which is a very grave fault indeed. Therefore have I been at pains in the pages that follow to review his home life impartially and, as it were, through both spectacles ; as also in the hope that my efforts may be accepted by him as a sort of *amende honorable* for any hard sayings which his alleged contrariness may have induced me at other times to launch at his devoted (if perfectly indifferent) head.

H. K. D.

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HOME LIFE IN NORWAY

CHAPTER I

THE GROSSERER

IN a democratic country, where a Cabinet Minister is vouchsafed a salary of £670 a year, a General and a Bishop are limited to £500, and a clerk and a servant-girl vegetate on £65 and £10 respectively, it is not surprising that the Grosserer, or merchant with a net income of £1000, should take premier rank in society, and, moreover, that the said income should go an astonishingly long way. A man in receipt of a clear £500 a year is very comfortably off, but the Grosserer and his £1000 is affluent among this aristocracy of the income. He will certainly get a great deal more out of it than his British confrère in receipt of treble that amount, and more. He should have no occasion to outrun the constable in the upkeep of a town house or flat, a country villa, a pair of horses and the requisite carriage and sleigh equipment, a large staff of servants, club subscriptions, fishing and

shooting excursions, and an occasional trip with his wife and children to the Continent. And he lives well—exceedingly well—and from the Norwegian standpoint luxuriously. His wines and spirits are of the best, for, with the innate shrewdness of his race, he imports them direct and bottles them himself. He takes no chances on the bottling question. The cigars of his country are of the usual cheap Continental brands, and not at all bad smoking to those who don't "know no different." But the Herr Grosserer does know the difference. So he gets them from England on a wholesale scale, out of bond, and thus for 1½d. or 2d. obtains the equivalent of a fourpenny and sixpenny London smoke. His food is (always from the Norwegian standpoint) of the best and purest that money may buy. For his paternal Government is not disposed to regard "preservatives" and "substitutes" with a favourable eye, and were it to do so, has he not the State chemist and the columns of his newspaper wherewith to make his grievance public—and effective. He is particularly well off in the matter of fish and game, of which he is immoderately fond, and his large consignments of dried fish and other commodities to the South of Europe enable his Government (who are adepts on the tariff and "most favoured clause"

questions) to present him with a varied and cheap assortment of Southern fruits. A certain proneness to ostentation, which his own writers have dubbed *stormands galskab*—or the mania for being of greater consequence than you actually are—will oftentimes lead him, like his Irish brother, into living "a little bit ahead of himself"; and improvidence is, alas, a failing which is pretty general among both classes of his country-men. He has also another weakness, if a natural goodness of heart may come within that definition: he will back a bill for a friend or a relation—especially a relation—on the least possible provocation. For which reason I have not dealt with his alleged capital, for it has been long since merged in the form of assistance to his poorer relations, of whom the prolific qualities of his countrymen present him with an embarrassing number. Throughout his life he never quite loses sight of these relations. His house is open to them at Christmas, Easter, and other seasonable vacations, and should a junior member be out of a berth his period of "resting" may be passed in the primal home as a matter of course. Should a financial cataclysm reverse their positions, the Grosserer and his family have always a haven of refuge to betake themselves to until such times as matters get straightened

out. And the same will apply to *bonde*, *husmand*, labourer, and the rest.

All of which will have doubtless led the reader to assume that the Norwegian merchant pater is a genial, affectionate, and home-loving creature, with a wife and children no less fond of him, and in this assumption he will be right. The Herr Grosserer has no particular love for the restaurant as the German has, or the club, which the Britisher affects. He likes to drop in at the former occasionally for his *pjolte* (whisky and soda) or glass of *baiersk öl* (Bavarian beer), and listen to the orchestra dealing with his favourite Olsen, Svendsen, Nordraak, Kjerulf, or Grieg—for he is above all things patriotic and partial in his musical taste. But he does not dine and wine his family and friends at the restaurant; and his club, which is a very mild affair indeed in comparison with the "Senior" or the Athenæum, will seldom contain him longer than is necessary to glance through the newspapers and magazines, and exchange a friendly political chat with a fellow-Grosserer, General, or *Statsraad*. In short, he is all for the home life and the amenities of the family circle, his womenkind naturally concurring.

What, then, is his attitude towards the latter generally?—and in the question I include the

entire male kind of Norway. Let me dispose of the peasant for the nonce, returning to the subject when dealing with him on later occasions. He is absolutely indifferent in his attitude towards the other sex—with a tacit indifference so complete, yet deadly, that one of his greatest writers has described its effect upon the weaker vessel as exceeding the cruel results of a physical blow. He will not like this if he should ever read it in the vernacular among the Lutheran treatises on his little bookshelf in the corner; but he will readily forgive me, as he has already done times out of number, when I have thundered at him on his alleged domestic shortcomings. He may possibly duck his big, round crop-head as one dodging an unexpected and uncalled-for physical assault and glance apprehensively at his other "rib," as she bends expressionless and sphinx-like over her knitting in the half light; but fortified by centuries of infallible conviction that he is profoundly correct in his views on the sex problem (which is no view at all), he will dismiss the subject from his mind with a "Ja-Ja" of indifference, and turn into his "four-poster" to smoke out his pipe with an easy conscience.

The Herr Grosserer's attitude towards the woman who has succeeded in coaxing "a vote" out of him is of a far different nature. To him

she is very dear indeed, with an endearment that ranks her only second to himself and his first-born son in his heart of hearts. But—ugh! these buts—he is less deferent towards her than is his English brother in his sexual relations. Indeed, I have heard the word "ungallant" whispered at times (and by his travelled countrymen) with a persistency that has been highly disturbing. But you may take it from me that he is far and away more gallant than the German, and not more ungallant than the average foreigner who has satisfied himself, in his own opinion, that Englishmen and Americans (to say nothing of Colonials) spoil their women by a superfluity of the attentions.

The Herr Grosserer is remarkably well-informed on all questions of foreign policy and political economy; and the British problems of "Lords and Commons," "Housing of the Poor," "Home Rule," and "Votes for Women," are as familiar, and unsolvable, to him as to the man in Fleet Street. His newspapers are numerous, enterprising, and intensely—if not monotonously—patriotic. They have, as special correspondents in every capital of importance, countrymen noted in the domain of belles-lettres, who, in column-long articles, give the Herr Grosserer a pretty intimate account of the domestic, literary,

theatrical, musical, fashionable, and political events of the world at large. In the feuilleton space, or "down in the cellar" as he humorously terms it, there is generally an English serial for the edification of his Frue and the Frökne; and the libraries and booksellers' shops are prolific in their supply of the best English, French, Russian and German authors, in the original or translated. Then there is the periodic homecoming of Herr Konsul Jensen or Herr Agent Hansen from their foreign activities for a short holiday spell of rest. These gentlemen are pleased, in the interest of their country, to furnish any and every kind of information on the commercial position of affairs within their foreign spheres of knowledge and experience—on demand, and at their advertised addresses. To them the Herr Grosserer will repair with avidity, and get to know all he is concerned to know, absolutely "free, gratis, and for nothing."

Personally the Herr Grosserer is a very hard-working man. Nine or half-past nine sees him in his office, and with the exception of a couple of hours' interval when he toddles into the family circle for his meals, he is steadily at it until the hours of six or seven. So devoted is he to a business whose every ramification he knows to the least detail that he has little relish for

retiring, even when advancing age begins to pluck at his sleeve. Like the British police superintendent, or the publican, he has a vague notion that retirement and dissolution are synonymous terms, and he will keep putting off the dreaded day until the very last, when his son (and right hand) will step into his place.

He is not concerned with the affairs of the house beyond his duties as paymaster in defraying his womenfolks' very moderate demands, and the young ladies, his daughters, are free to go and come whenever the spirit may so move them, without any undue catechising on his part. But he does *not* like that young cavalry lieutenant. Neither do his fellow-Grosserere like him. Nobody who has a daughter with a substantial dot in prospective does seem to like him, somehow, except the daughter aforesaid, and possibly the mother, who at least does not dislike him. For, alas, he is practically without an income, and his prospects of promotion are Fabian to a degree. He is, moreover, of the peasantry, from whence he is directly recruited and specially trained. But then he is such a fine, handsome, manly young fellow, with the very airs of the mountain and forest still upon him, even in the close atmosphere of the crowded ballroom. And

how well he dances! And, above all, look at his uniform with its buttons and braid—he has never appeared before them in his original home-spun and hobnails—is he not positively ravishing? Papa is buttonholed, coaxed, cajoled, and generally bamboozled by poor uniform-stricken mama on behalf of their hopelessly infatuated *pigelil*. Papa, for once in a way, throws back to his Viking progenitors and storms and raves like a veritable *Berserk*. Mama cries. So do the *pigelil* and her sisters. Everybody cries, even to the women-servants, who are every bit as concerned for a favourable issue as the *pigelil* herself. Papa suggests, as a compromise, a period of foreign travel, with a lengthened stay in Dresden. He might just as well have suggested a period of astral flight with a prolonged sojourn in the moon. Mama won't hear of it. The *pigelil* is too far gone to hear of anything—except her lieutenant. Papa seizes his hat and stick and rushes off to his club to think it all out over a cigar, coffee, and liqueur; and then, returning later on under the humanizing influence of those sedatives, gives the hysterical little *pigelil* his blessing—and her lieutenant.

And that is the reason why the fortune-hunting young peasant lieutenant is not beloved of the Grosserer, nor anyone else beneath his rank

whose daughter is entitled by law to her dower. But the young lieutenant doesn't mind that in the least. Why, it is of the very essence of the game—which he is always winning, even now as it ever shall be.

CHAPTER II

A DINNER PARTY

THE Norwegian *selskab* is a very formal, not to say tremendous, affair. It is apparently an institution designed less for eating purposes than for speech-making and the mixing of miscellaneous drinks. Yet when compared with the eclectic dietary of some of our dinner-parties there is an element of refined barbarism about it that is not without its attraction, at least to those who can stand them, or a series of them.

The Herr Grosserer issues his invitations (they are somewhat of the nature of a genial writ-of-attachment) eight days previous to the execution —pshaw! the dinner party; and it is usually intimated that the occasion is in honour of a particular guest. Winter is the season proper of the *selskab*, and half an hour before the dinner, which is usually at 6 p.m., the sleighs with their complements begin to arrive at the Herr Grosserer's door, he and the Frue Grosserer being in readiness in the drawing-room to receive their guests as soon as the wraps and goloshes have

been removed in the hall. Incidentally it should be mentioned that weddings take place between the hours of 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. in order that the inevitable *selskab* may round off the happy occasion as a sort of "wedding dinner."

Unpunctuality in arrival is considered a very grave breach of manners, and (accidents apart) it would be difficult to surmise what would happen in such an eventuality beyond the certainty that at any future Grossererial *selskab* the offending person or persons would be rendered highly conspicuous by their absence. The guests, of whom there may be some thirty or more, are introduced to each other by the Herr Grosserer by name and profession, solemnly and exhaustively, as though he were empanelling a species of festive jury, and cards are distributed whereon the names of the several partners are inscribed. When the psychical moment has arrived the doors of the *spise sal* (dining room) are thrown open, and the Herr Grosserer leads the way in with the wife of the specially honoured guest, the Frue Grosserer with the specially honoured one, and the others follow on and take their places at the table, in conformity with duplicate cards distributed thereon. The Herr Grosserer sits at the head of the table with the wife of the specially honoured guest on his right, and the Frue

Grosserer at the other end, having the specially honoured one also on her right. This is the usual

Menu

Oysters.	
Soup. . . .	Sherry or Madeira.
Fish	Claret or Burgundy.
Entrées . . .	Rhine wines.
Meat Pudding.	
Roast Game . .	Champagne.
Caramel Pudding.	
Jellies, Ices, and Cakes.	
Fruit, various.	
Cheese, Biscuits, etc.	

If there be an *udlaending* (a foreigner, let us say an Englishman) among the guests, and he has never before been to a *selskab*, he is immediately impressed by the unusually large array of wine glasses that confronts him. They are of all sizes, shapes, and colours, and may on high occasions total as many as eight to each guest. But he will have little time to devote to an inspection of the table equipage, for with the appearance of the first dish the Herr Grosserer, with an admonitory tap on his glass, is on his legs and drinking a *velkommen til bords* (welcome to my table) with his guests.

With the champagne he is again in evidence

in a rather lengthy speech in honour of the most important guest of the evening, whose health he finally invites his guests to toast, and who in turn responds with an equally solemn oration and an appeal to all and sundry to drink "skaal" to their host.

These preliminaries over, any one is at liberty to tap his glass, rise to his feet, and make a speech on any subject which the particular occasion may appear to demand. During the speeches, of course, all act of deglutition must cease. Between the intervals of speech-making the lesser ceremony (though it is formidable enough in all conscience) of the dual "skaal" may be gone through at any moment between two gentlemen, or a lady and a gentleman. But it is not etiquette—indeed, it would be a *bêtise*—to invite your host to drink a "skaal" with you. He has already included you in the collective *velkommen til bords*, and he will probably, on his own initiative, raise his glass to you during the progress of the meal; but you must not appeal to his suffrages on your own account; and you will not do so unless you are an *udlaending*, and don't know better. And the reason for this disability is very obvious. The Herr Grosserer will have had to drink collectively to his guests in his

Velkommen til bords, . . .	say	drink	1
To his honoured guest, . .	,,	,,	1
To the return "skaal," . .	,,	,,	1
To, say, a dozen "skaal" speeches,	,,	,,	12
To, let us say on his private initiative,	,,	,,	12
Total drinks			27

Having thus disposed of some twenty-seven "skaals" in wines of a more or less dangerous calibre, it should be apparent that if each of his thirty guests took it into his head to "skaal" him separately the cumulative result of fifty-seven "skaals" would (even if he were a music-hall chairman) have the effect of rendering the Herr Grosserer noisily, or morosely, indifferent to all subsequent proceedings. Happily there is no injunction in the matter of heel-taps, and it is not considered a penal offence to sip your wine when responding to a "skaal."

With your six or eight glasses beside you in a more or less filled, or empty, condition, you will, if you are an old hand, make the most of the intervals between the speech-making to satisfy your hunger. The wines are superb, and you would probably give a good deal to be able to enjoy them in your own particular way and with-

out the necessity of having to "skaal" your neighbour whenever the craving is upon you. But you may not do this. To indulge in a surreptitious drink—"on your own," as it were—is not considered good form; yet wine drunk during the formalities of a "skaal" cannot, in the opinion of the gourmet, receive full justice. At least that is . . .

"Herr Ingeniör Tompkinson. Skaal!"

Your fellow-guest opposite, glass in hand, is claiming your attention in the matter of a "skaal."

You lay down your knife and fork instanter, note the contents of his glass (which is Burgundy), find you are out of stock in that particular vintage, say *undskyld* (excuse me), fill your glass, and raise it with solemnity. You then gaze at one another portentously, sternly—even as duellists taking each other's measure—and you respond:

"Herr General-Major Normandal. Skaal!"

The act of drinking having then followed, slowly, austerely, and without the least semblance of relish, you again catch the eye of your adversary, hold up your empty glass with a gesture as who should say, "You see; there's no deception," and then put it down, to go on with your dinner.

There is no occasion for undue nervousness if

it be always borne in mind that the wine in your glass must ever correspond with that of which your "skaaler" invites you to partake: Sherry to Sherry, Burgundy to Burgundy, Hochheimer to Hochheimer, but never Claret to Madeira, or Hock to Champagne. An *udlaending* may commit a *faux pas* with impunity, safe in the polite tolerance of the most courteous of peoples; but were a Norwegian to bewray himself under similar circumstances the only conclusion that could possibly be arrived at would be that he had reached that unhappy stage when the classification of wines is of no particular consequence: and this *has* happened—on occasion. Therefore there is nothing for it but to sit tight (in that word's sober sense), maintain a cool head, gauge your partner's inclinations with a view to a not too frequent "skaal" with her, and look to the permanent upkeep of your several glasses. Above all, be prepared to catch your name—especially if your host should be predisposed to utter it. A careless consideration of these matters is apt to engender panic, and lead to disaster. On hearing your name proclaimed you will probably start guiltily, and after a frantic performance, as upon musical glasses, drink the wrong wine to your fellow-guest's health—and your own confusion.

"Skaals" and speeches apart, the ordinary traffic of the meal is marked by the greatest conviviality and bonhomie. Indeed it could not be otherwise when it is remembered that the majority of the guests have probably known each other from childhood. The Norwegians, and especially the Norwegian lady, are adepts in the art of dinner-table converse, and awkward pauses are of the things that will not supervene if the Frue Grosserer knows her business in the selection of the guests. The "funny man" is of course there, as inevitably as the low comedian is in evidence at a Green Room Club dinner, and with the self-same pleasant task before him—to set the table a-roar. Shop, even among a nation of shopkeepers, is avoided, or left to those less competent to deal with it. The Herr Advokat is discussing the last Sinding composition with the Frue Generalinde. Herr Spilman, the composer, is talking "horse" to the Herr Grosserer's eldest daughter; and his literary friend Hannson and the Frue Stadsraadinde are at one on the proper method of boiling spring cabbage. Even the grave Herr Statsminister himself is obviously far from the madding subjects of "party" and international polity in his dealings with the charming young Fröken Trylledal. Then in the middle of it all, when the Herr Doktor and the

Frue Admiralinde are laughing heartily at the latter's onslaught on the "decadent trend of modern novels," and the Herr Grosserer is in the middle of a "big fish" story, the sound of the tapped glass falls like a bolt from the blue, and the Herr Vaerftseier (wharf-owner) Ollsohn is on his legs amid a silence that is of the most profound. But the ordeal is soon over, and with the closing "skaal" the conversational din breaks forth afresh.

All carving is done in "another place"—to wit, the kitchen, and the results are brought in and offered to the company by maids who have grown to woman's estate, and beyond, in the service of the Herr Grosserer. An evening such as this is one of the events of their lives, and it will not be their fault if the dinner-party should not be a success so far as the kitchen and the waiting are concerned. The *selskab* is every bit as much their *selskab* as it is that of the *herreskab* (company), and they are really enjoying themselves immensely. They will pause at the sound of the tapped glass as though petrified, and, plate in hand, listen with eager approval to the Herr Kaptein's amiable and windy nothings; and there is even an air of deferent familiarity in the manner in which they fill your glasses and hold the dishes at your elbow. No stertorous breath-

ings and spilled gravies here. Under the benevolent and matronly tutelage of the Frue Grosserer and subsequent years of practice, they are now as it were to the *selskab* born, and the honour of "the house" is absolutely safe in their deft hands.

The duration of the *selskab* is always an inordinately lengthy one, and the Herr *Udlaending* may consider himself remarkably lucky if he gets off with anything under three hours. The signal for the "break up" is given, not by the host or hostess, but by a guest (usually the gentleman who has taken the hostess in), who it has been previously arranged shall at a certain hour rise, and after a general speech of a "summing up" nature, invite the guests to drink the final "skaal" of *tak for mad* (thanks for the food partaken) to their host and hostess.

The company then rise. The host and hostess take up a position near the door, and the guests return to the drawing-room in their previous order, each one of them pausing on the way to shake hands with the Herr and Frue Grosserer, and, repeating the formula of *tak for mad*, are met with the variant *velbekomne*, literally "much good may it do you"—without that expression's ulterior meaning.

In the drawing-room, or *salon* (there are usually

two, or even three of ample Continental dimensions), coffee with cream, and liqueurs are served; and about an hour afterwards the servants appear with a Gargantuan supply of whisky, cognac, mineral waters, and cigars. The remainder of the evening is then devoted to cards, music, and general conversation, and between the hours of one and two next morning, when the guests are having a dish of tea, the jangle of the first sleigh bells outside is usually the signal for a general leave-taking. On the Sunday following the guests leave cards with the Herr Grosserer; his Frue, and his Frökne; and there will be one at least among them who has already made up his mind to give a retaliatory *selskab*.

CHAPTER III

HOME LIFE IN FLATS

NORWEGIANS of the better class have long since adopted the flat as the most contained and convenient form of dwelling to suit all seasons of the year. It is considered more exclusive than the town house, whose ground floor is wholly devoted to shops, store-rooms, and the offices connected therewith; although the latter, of course, contains a large proportion of the town population. A family in comfortable circumstances will usually occupy a flat of eight rooms, exclusive of kitchen, pantry, and servants' bedrooms. These rooms practically open one into the other by means of large folding doors, and are far more extensive than similar apartments in England. The annual rent of a flat of this kind is about £80, and to furnish it comfortably a sum of from £300 to £400 would be required, which are large amounts when the small average income of the people is taken into account.

The house containing the flat (as indeed all

Norwegian houses) is well and solidly built, with massive stone foundations, calculated to obviate settlements from cold and heat extremes, and to keep out the damp. A damp house is one of the rarities of the country. I have never had the misfortune to meet with one, and I have lived in a good many. Such a house as that under consideration will consist of four floors, with a front and back stairs for the use of the family and the servants respectively; and never shall you meet with pails, sweeping-brushes, ash-buckets, or trays of soiled crockery-ware on a Norwegian front stairs landing, as are in such frequent and painful evidence on the staircases of a "right little, tight little island" to the south-west. The front stair is usually carpeted, and on each floor there are commodious, well-lighted landings, admirably adapted to meet the temporary crush at dinner-parties, balls, and other festive occasions.

The first room one enters is a species of vestibule or anteroom, corresponding in its uses (though more comprehensively) to the English hall; and adjoining this is a smaller *salon* or general room, which also serves the purpose of smoking-room, and is much affected by the male members of the family. Out of this we step into the *salon* proper, a many-windowed room of

spacious dimensions, and from thence into another of no less ample size, which is the dining-room. This room will have a capacity designed for the entertainment, with comfort, of as many as forty guests. A large serving-room or pantry separates the dining-room from the kitchen, and in this apartment, which is proportionately large, the whole of the dining-table equipage is stored. A corridor, which avoids the kitchen, leads to the *barnevaerelse* (nursery) and the bedrooms beyond, and the servants' rooms have their separate entrance from the back stairs.

In all the more modern flats, bathrooms are provided, and where they are wanting, portable baths or the numerous bathing establishments of the towns meet the deficiency.

The bedrooms are furnished with wooden bedsteads, and the bed furniture is certainly calculated to repel the severest Arctic cold. The spring-and-hair mattress is overlaid by a substantial feather mattress, and the sheets, with a thick single blanket are topped by a heavy eider-down quilt. Then every room has, of course, its stove for almost continual winter use, wherein wood or coal, or coke, is burned. In the kitchen, gas-stoves are often used in an auxiliary capacity to the open range for cooking purposes.

Electric-lighting, which in Norway is so cheap

that even the labourers of the town avail themselves of it, is the rule in the flat, as are also telephones and electric communications. The living rooms are cosily, not to say luxuriously furnished—with a tendency to the "Empire" in style; and there is always a large supply of flowers in bloom, and palms, at the windows and distributed throughout the rooms. This love of the fostering of flowers (far more in evidence in the towns than among the peasantry) is quite a passion in urban Norway, and, contrary to British convictions as to the baleful effects of indoor plants on the health, roses in a great many varieties are always to be seen in profusion at the windows during the winter months, to be replaced in the spring by a large display of tulips, hyacinths, and other flowers of the bulb species. The Norwegian has a great liking for oil paintings, of which the walls of his rooms bear ample witness. Water-colours do not appeal to him, and are seldom in evidence.

Floors, as a rule, are carpeted throughout the living rooms, and fur and other rugs are also much in use for supplementary purposes. Norwegian windows are of the usual "opening out" or casement kind, and during severe spells of cold have duplicate frames fitted from within, between which and the window proper cotton-

wool is laid. The carpets are brushed, and bare places and carpetless floors washed daily, with a general "house clean" before Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide. In summer all carpets and heavy curtains are removed. The washing of the family linen is carried out by the servant, with or without extra help, and the drying is done in a very extensive loft, which also serves as a sort of well-ordered "lumber-room."

The day begins with *Kaffe og Kager* (coffee and cakes), which are brought to the bedside by the maid—who, in winter, has previously made a fire in the stove. Breakfast is served at nine or half-past, and consists of coffee, bread-and-butter, boiled or fried eggs and bacon, or ham. Heavy meat breakfasts are not the vogue in Norway. Paterfamilias then goes off to his office (in many cases it adjoins the *salon*), his son to his particular vocation, and his daughters, if they are grown up, assist their mother in the lighter duties of the house—dusting the furniture, seeing to the plants, and in many ways making themselves generally useful. All musical practice is also done about this time.

Household matters are under the direct personal supervision of the mother. She sees to the "buying in" of all the necessaries, either in person or through the telephone, but she will not

fail to visit the butcher and satisfy herself on the questions of quality, price, and weight. The acts of visitation and chaffering in winter are attended with less physical discomfort in Norway than in England, for the Norwegian *kjöbmand* (shop-keeper) always keeps his fires going in the shop, and to enter and leave his premises without closing the door is a *gaucherie* which is not often committed.

By twelve o'clock materfamilias will have completed all her arrangements for the day, and with her daughters is prepared to receive visitors. The latter call (preferably on Sundays) between 12 and 2 P.M., and are always offered wine and cakes—the ladies of the house waiting upon the gentlemen.

There are no cold dinners in Norway. That meal is served at 2 P.M., and consists as a rule of soup, fish, a hot dish, sweets, and cheese, with a red wine, or beer, as a beverage. It is immediately followed by coffee with cream, and cakes, which are served in the drawing-room.

At half-past five a light tea is indulged in, and later on (at 8.30) *aftensmad* (supper) is served. The latter generally includes one hot dish with a variety of side dishes, and of course cheese; and milk, tea, or beer is drunk. Wine and some fruit are in evidence at about 10 o'clock; and between 11.30 and 12 (for the townsman is always a late bird) the family retire to rest.

CHAPTER IV

CHILDREN, AND THEIR EDUCATION

IT has been popularly conceded that, next to Japan, Norway is *par excellence* the children's paradise. Right up to the very day of the Confirmation ceremony the boy's life is one continuous round of riotous frolic. In winter time the rivers, lakes, and frozen seas swarm with him on skates, or on skis and hand-sleighs, flying down the narrow streets of his hilly town, to the terror of the elderly and obese. In summer he is in boats all over the neighbouring fjords, fishing, shooting, swimming, and in manifold other ways risking his life, as the death-column of the local paper frequently attests. But his favourite place of rendezvous in all seasons, out of school hours, is the public side-walk. There he is always to be seen at his best, or worst, as the passing grown-up may be prompted to enter judgment for or against him. Not that he cares in the least what anyone may think of him and his ways. For he is having the one great fling of his existence, and he is

going to make the most of it while he can. Then on the day before mentioned, as though he had been exorcised by some malign fairy's wand, he lapses into a sober, almost depressing, quietude of demeanour that practically obtains throughout his life. The same applies to his little sister, who is not one whit less noisy and venturesome than her brother; indeed, in the opinion of the native grown-up, she is infinitely worse. Yet there is this difference to be noted as an after-result of the ceremony which compels her to put her hair up and her skirts down: though considerably more subdued, as in the nature of things Norwegian she is bound to be, she is latently, as it were, the same bright, joyous, romantic creature, with the frank, open expression and winning smile that constitute her especial charm. For which reason I have put her by—even as children set apart the things that are sweet—for separate and exclusive dealing. Among the peasantry the fairy's wand would seem to have had a more blighting effect on both sexes. The boy is, as often as not, transformed into a confirmed lout, and his sister into a stolid prig—with a priggishness, however, that will not be maintained for one second beyond the absolute needs of the occasion.

Who is there that has not been impressed on

his first landing in Norway by the sight of these tumultuous swarms of children at play? They monopolize the side-walks as though to the pre-emption born, and always with that conscious air as of the town being wholly and solely theirs —which it virtually is, and the mere grown-ups so many hard-working stay-at-homes, designed by Providence for their special edification and patronage—which they actually are; and the clattering sound of their myriad feet, and their loud ringing laughter continue throughout the live-long day, until the eight o'clock curfew bell sends them scurrying off into their homes. It is good to be always on easy terms with them. They are quick to appreciate sympathy, and to reward it in their many pretty and innocent ways. Are you fond of flowers? You will be presented with bouquets and wreaths of bloom on the most unexpected occasions. Have you, in an unguarded moment, confessed to a furtive regard for sweets? You may be stopped at any moment in the public street by a tiny hand offering you some variegated and sticky form of confection. These little people are not lightly to be contemned, and it would be a rash man indeed who would venture to draw down upon himself the vials of their puny wrath. They are past-masters in the art of booing and the *pibe concert* (a

species of whistling concerto, *tutti*, outside your windows of nights), and I have even known of a case of a man of the *genus irritabile* who had to sell up his house and home and vacate a town which their implacable attentions had rendered uninhabitable. Have a care as to that. You will get no sympathy from the parents should you present your grievances to them, for they will know that you are only as one in a million, who has wantonly brought it all upon himself. Nor will it do to apply to the nearest policeman for redress. He will probably not go out of his way to catch the delinquents—and couldn't if he tried. Next to a dog they are the most faithful and affectionate of friends a lonely man could possibly possess. They will run your errands, row your boat, carry your fishing tackle and gun, and impart exclusive information, all in a dilettante, patronizing way (for you must remember they are your equals) that is very charming, if at times embarrassing. But before they will do all this they must know that you are truly one of themselves, and that you see and judge affairs as they do, otherwise you will have no spell to conjure them with, and they will rank you with their own country-men grown-ups, who simply look upon the small boy and girl as something beyond, or beneath their purview. It is this

kindly and complaisant indifference of the parents that attracts him to the sympathizing and fully-grown stranger. His little sister, less demonstrative in her advances, tacitly concurs in all he may say or do—but from a more respectful distance. This freemasonry of affection has mysterious and far-reaching ramifications, extending through their parents and acquaintances even to distant towns, where you will be pleasurably astonished to find your paths made as easy by their silent good offices as though you had been armed with a governmental passport. They will never forget you, and should the day ever dawn when your destinies take you far away from their shores, they will be found in little sorrowful groups on railway platforms, piers, and even on distant promontories, waving their last *farvels* to the foreign grown-up who always saw, and appreciated, things from *their* point of view.

To look at the worthy Herr Grosserer, spectacled, portly, dignified, and so very correct in every particular, you could never bring the mind's eye to see him posting along on skates, skis, hand-sleighs, or any other contrivance designed for slippery surfaces; and to picture him in the act of waging bloody war upon the common enemy, the *gade gut*, or street arab, would cor-

respond with an attempt to square the circle, or elucidate a theory of the fourth dimension. Yet he has done this thing in his boyhood's days, and the dear old Frue Grosserer his wife, dozing over her Hardanger embroidery in her saddleback chair, has probably yelled her plaudits at him from the safer vantage of her snow-fortress.

The average Norwegian boy of the better class is a little gentleman in that word's most natural sense, and his small sister is no less qualified to assume the title of lady. From a very early period they are taught to respect and obey their parents, to be especially considerate and tolerant to the servants, and to exhibit deference towards their elders. These are the fundamental moral laws that govern, or at least regulate, the pandemonium of high spirits before referred to. Then follow the discipline of the schools, with their inculcation of self-respect and love of country, and the daily example of tactful and well-bred teachers of either sex.

Their paternal Government takes them in hand at a very early period of their lives, and all children of whatsoever religious denomination or sect (the few Roman Catholics in the country have their separate schools) are compelled to attend the *folke skole*, or free schools, at the age of six, and to continue in attendance for seven years.



A FOLKE SKOLE INTERIOR

Of course, parents have the option of sending them to the so-called *höiere* (higher) or paying schools should they be disposed to do so. In these *folke skoler* the children are well grounded in the "three r's," the grammar of their language, the history of the nations—especially that of their own country—geography, natural science, religion, drawing, part-singing, Swedish gymnastics, and the more advanced pupils have the option of learning English. The boys are also taught the rudiments of practical carpentering, and the girls to sew and knit. Upper-form girls may attend the *skole kjökken* (cookery school), where they acquire a first-hand knowledge of the kitchen and its branches. In addition to one holiday a month, they are given three weeks' holiday at Christmas, one week at Easter, and in the summer seven weeks; and special reductions—in many cases even free fares—are vouchsafed to them over railway and steamer routes during the space of these vacations.

Their time of attendance at school averages from four to five hours daily. They are provided with à warm bath every fortnight, and in the case of the poorer children one substantial hot dinner daily. In addition to these acts of educational grace they are supplied cost free with all their books and writing material; and if the school

should be in the neighbourhood of the sea they are frequently taken out to bathe, and specially taught how to save life under circumstances of drowning. Particular attention is paid to the cleanliness and general tidiness of the little ones, and it is the duty of the schoolmistress to call on recalcitrant parents and administer a rousing homily to them on the peculiar virtues of soap when combined with water, a duty which is not infrequently attended with some amount of personal risk. Any neglect to send their children to school is visited on the parents by repeated fines, and even imprisonment.

Volumes would be required to deal exhaustively with the practical methods of teaching in force in these ideal *folke skoler*, all of which have been designed with the one object of affording the least possible excuse for shiftless amateurism in that stern after-struggle for existence with which the hard conditions of a poor country confront its youth. The well-designed, almost palatial *folke skole*, its systems and its numerous connecting institutions for the benefit of the children of the very poor, have long been the admiration of foreign visiting Commissions, and there are few countries who have not at one time or another taken a leaf out of *Gamle Norges* well-considered book. The pity of it all is that

so much of these moneys should be expended for the benefit of other lands; yet in this connection, and on the personal initiative of a democratic and popular king, serious efforts are at present being made to check, by better home inducements, the flow of emigration, which is so deterrent to all national progress.

The *höiere* or *middel* schools are no less renowned for their systems of teaching. Indeed I have frequently heard Germans extol them to the disadvantage of their own admirable institutions. They are certainly ridiculously cheap. The curriculum includes and exceeds that of the *folke skole*. Latin and Greek are optional, but English, German, and French are a special feature, the first two languages being compulsory; and it should be noted that these idioms must be written and spoken with the necessary degree of fluency for all practical purposes of life. Thorough is the word which the Norwegian, equally with his German brother, has ever in mind, and it remains with him throughout his career, as some of the greatest feats of the engineering world bear ample witness.

The boys and girls of the higher schools are given the same holidays as those of the *folke skole*, and at sixteen years of age they

take their exam. Having passed the latter, they enter either a mercantile academy or a technical school, or, if they are inclined to law, medicine, or theology, they can remain on another three years at the school and matriculate (Artium) for the University—a matriculation, by the way, which is considered to be far more difficult of acquirement than that for our own Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Finally, and as a sort of cap-stone to this fund of theoretical and practical teaching, the young man of the better class is sent to Germany, England, or France to study their languages and acquire for himself some better general knowledge of affairs.

CHAPTER V

NORWEGIAN WOMEN

THE first among the women of European nations to secure her "vote," and her seat in Parliament, the recognized authority in all social movements directly affecting the home life, and the unafraid champion of her undoubted right to have a look in wherever the privileges of her sex are likely to be endangered (you will even find her patrolling the streets of Christianssand as a duly sworn-in and uniformed "bobby"), the Norwegian woman merits some special degree of attention. How has she managed to accomplish all this, and still remain so irritatingly feminine, so aggressively womanly? For she is self-abnegatory to an extent that cannot appeal to the "manhood" of her more militant sisters in other lands. She will admit with full-eyed candour that for her the *trang* towards motherhood and the home is of the very essence of her being; yet, failing the attainment of those ends, she will make the best use of her many accomplish-

ments to shift for herself, trusting to her natural and acquired philosophy to maintain a young heart, true-fast friends, and, firm in the faith of her fathers, to take her departure in peace. What, then, is the source of this power, or rather sweet suasion, which has given her practically all she wants of communal authority to regulate the proceedings of her more self-sufficient brother? Of nature she is venturesome and courageous to an unusual extent. To her the true Viking spirit, with its love of derring-do and its power of stoical endurance, would seem to have been transmitted in all its pristine virility. In the list of toboggan casualties resulting from the break-neck descents of her Holmenkollen gorges, her name appears oftener than that of her less risk-taking brother. On ski she will accompany and equal him in pluck and endurance in the wildest of wild-cat mountain tours. She can manœuvre a sail-boat like a pilot, swim like her native eider-duck, roam her rugged uplands with all the dogged pertinacity of a professional tramp; and withal she will remain to you of womanly women a very woman. It is provoking (as it is of the very nature of that despised cult to ruffle our sense of modernity), but it is nevertheless lamentably true. The British tourist of the

"superior 'Arry" type (and we get him on occasion), who, pipe in mouth, contemplates her with insular patronage as she patiently attends to his requirements at the post-office, telegraph station, or apothecary's shop, has no conception of the amount of information there is stored in that little head. To him she is merely a telephone-girl, or a shop-girl, and nothing more —certainly not a lady, or she wouldn't be there, don't-ye-know? To be sure he will exhibit some degree of pleasurable surprise when she laughingly ignores his English-Dano-Norsk conversation book and addresses him in fluent English; and to that extent, and her faculty of being able to look him straight in the eyes as a sister may her brother, is she a "rippin' good sort and all that, what?" But he would never dream that she could discuss with him (which *he* couldn't do for the life of him) the several merits of Tolstoi, Dickens, and Ibsen, or the ethics of citizenship, or even the classification of polygons. Nor would it occur to him that she was qualified by breeding and education to take her place among the best circles his country can boast—in other words, that she was every inch a little lady, and knew how to behave herself "as sich." But in these matters I fear he is of the category of the Ancients, who,

we are informed, on the authority of an American humorist, were justly renowned for what they *didn't* know.

Women—French women *bien entendu*—will say that she does not know how to "do her hair." But this is a libel. Her Greuze-like features, with that charm which a not too regular profile alone can impart, is not adapted to a restraining form of coiffure. And she knows it. That is all. She might with more truth retort (which she wouldn't do) that she has no use for powder puff, rouge pot, a six-inch waist, and a four-inch boot heel, and yet remain a dangerously fascinating little personality.

I repeat she might say this, but she wouldn't; for the retort brutal does not enter into the curriculum of her studies. If her brother is partial to English snips and tweeds, her inclinations would seem to be rather in the direction of German confection in dress. I say "would seem" advisedly, for I believe this is a matter less of choice than owing to the fact that the country is overrun by German commercials with their easier methods for the opening up of accounts—and settling them. But such as she is obliged to wear she certainly knows how to put on. The pitchfork process so often seen among our lower middle classes does not com-

"hend itself to her sense of appearance, and she oc; always neatly frocked, booted, and gloved; v nd never is the eye offended by the sight of tc partially hooked blouses and the lack of una- s himity between the bottom of the latter and the top of the skirt, a state of things which lengthy observation has led me to believe has long been a vexed question for equitable adjustment.

All this takes us no nearer to the question I have propounded as to the reason of the Norwegian woman's influence in domains which were formerly considered to be the special preserves of her male country-man. Possibly the answer may lie in the fact that in the interval from the day when she and he enter the higher school together until their ascent of the University steps, she has succeeded in exercising that better influence over him (has eradicated, as it were, certain age-old prejudices) which her greater tact, initiative, and wit was bound to do. He has been brought to consider in his matter-of-fact dull way that there was after all something in her. Away from the desk their nine years of school life has been one sustained period of romp, confidential chat, summer walks, ski and sleigh excursions, and boating trips amidst the most romantic surroundings imaginable, and she is romantic to a degree, though

she will certainly not admit it. They have always been as free to come and go as the adagial bee in a lilac tree. In short they have, as with the American youth (though she is far less exacting than the American girl), established a sort of camaraderie that has more than probably made for those future concessions on the suffrage question which she of her very nature was bound to crave. He may have been a little sceptical at first as to the wisdom of such a policy. She was not; and through her Collettes, Hansteens, Gina Krogs, and other doughty champions of her rights he was given no rest until for very peace and quiet's sake he good humouredly consented. And now he has both the peace and the quietude, and as a sort of return for his complaisance, I am not so certain but that she doesn't spoil him most outrageously at times — possibly with a view to further concessions. One never knows what is at the back of that wise little head.[1]

It is worth while following her through some of the stages of her educational experiences if only to test my contention, eschewing all

[1] On Saturday, 25 February, 1911, the Norwegian Government submitted a Bill entitling women to be appointed to all the offices of State, excepting only military, diplomatic, and clerical posts. Another Bill was submitted entitling women to act as trustees.

technical details of class-work as pertaining more to the province of visiting commissions.

She goes to school, as previously mentioned, after the attainment of her sixth year, paying for her

First	Years'	Teaching	. 50	kroner.[1]
2nd and 3rd	,,	,,	. 70	,,
4th	,,	,,	. 95	,,
5th, 6th, 7th & 8th	,,	,,	. 145	,,
9th	,,	,,	. 240	,,

If more children of the same parents attend there is a considerable reduction in the above fees. During her first year, which commences on September 1, her attendance is from ten to half-past twelve, with ten minutes' interval for play—when the schoolrooms are given a thorough airing. At the school she can obtain for a penny her cup of chocolate wherewith to enjoy her home-made sandwiches; the latter usually consisting of *gjed ost* (goats' cheese), a substance that looks uncommonly like ordinary brown soap, and might taste like a sweeter variety of that abluent—though as a matter of fact its appetizing and sustaining qualities are notoriously good, and it is practically the national cheese among the many Norwegian cheeses. At home during the after-

[1] A krone is about 1s. 1½d.

noon she will devote a couple of hours to the preparation of her lessons for the following day. From her second to the end of her fifth year's attendance her hours are from nine to half-past twelve, and she is taught, as during her first year, all those subjects pertaining to the *folke skole* curriculum. At the end of the fifth year, her preparatory schooling being finished, she enters the *Middelskole* stage, and is taught German, and in the seventh year, when the hours have been prolonged from nine to two, she "takes on" English, and is thoroughly initiated into the grammatical, compositional, and conversational idiosyncrasies of that language. She is now rapidly approaching the years of her discretion, and she improves the occasion by private lessons in music and dancing; for, like all Scandinavians, she is passionately devoted to the "light fantastic" art. In winter she skates, toboggans, or goes on ski, and in the summer is much in evidence at play; or she may have a preference for long walks; but whatever form her relaxation may take she is required to be at home by eight o'clock. In many of the larger towns a church bell is tolled at eight with that particular object. There is a library attached to the school, from whence and for a penny a month she may take English, German, or other books of an innocuous

kind once a week, keeping them if necessary for a fortnight; for she is ever a voracious reader. The examinations take place in the beginning of June and continue throughout that month, when a sort of fête is held for the children on July 1, at which the Herr Rektor makes them an edifying speech and presents them with their certificates of proficiency. Before she can take her *Middelskole* exam., however, she must pay to the examining censors a fee of 20 kroner. The first portion of this inquisition is in writing, and includes Norwegian, English, German, and mathematics; and after an interval of a week she undergoes a *vivâ voce* examination, usually in three or four subjects, as for instance Norwegian, geography, English, and mathematics, and she is given two days to prepare for each. She has no *eksamen* in *gymnastik*, although her brother has.

During the first years of her school life she sits beside the other boys, but even at the age of twelve a boy who has not "behaved" may be placed beside *her*, as a sort of "horrible warning," I suppose, *et pour encourager les autres*. When about fifteen she prepares for her confirmation, attending at the præst's (a Lutheran minister of the Norwegian Established Church) twice a week, and for a preparatory period of six months. She

is then confirmed at the church, and is presented by her friends and relations with a number of durable presents to remind her in future years of the solemnity of that day's proceedings.

Her *Middelskole* examination over, she is at liberty to enter a *Handelsgymnasium* for a commercial training, from whence she takes up a salaried position in a business office. Or she may enter the service of the State in a telegraph, telephone, or post-office. If she decides for the telephone, she is provided with three months' free tuition, when she may vicariate at 3½d. an hour for a few years until she gets her official appointment with a salary of from £3, 7s. 6d. to £5 a month, for an attendance of eight hours daily. The foregoing also applies to the telegraph service and the post-office, except that in the former she is given six months' gratis teaching, and her pay in both these branches is better. When it is remembered that every little shop or private house of any consequence at all in Norway had its telephone before their use was even contemplated by London houses of repute, and that the greater part of the ordinary business of the former country is conducted through the telephone or by wire, it must be admitted that the life of the Norwegian telephone and telegraph girl is not a particularly roseate one. The irregular working



CHURCHWARDEN, VIK. SHOWING OFFERTORY BAG, WITH BELL ATTACHED TO AWAKEN SLEEPERS

intervals, with their attendant uncertainty of meal hours, together with the constant strain on the attention, is often too much for even her iron constitution. Nervousness is apt to supervene, and she is frequently obliged to relinquish her place to "a different girl again," and at a comparatively early period of her life. "I have been one myself," writes one of them, now happily married and beyond the worries of office, "and I will advise every girl never to become one." A subscription of four or five kroner a month is paid into a *pensions kasse*, and if she is able to hold out until between fifty and sixty years of age she is pensioned off. When her home is not in the town she usually lives at a *pensionat*.

There are, however, other alternatives for making a living after she has left the *middelskole*. She may enter a *seminarium*, and after three years' training qualify as a teacher. There are several of these institutions on a free-teaching basis in Norway, but none, strange to say, in the metropolis. In Christiania she must pay a yearly fee of 250 kroner, but a "*student*" need only remain for one year. A period of *vikariering* (vicariating) then follows for some years, at a pay of 3½d. an hour, until she has secured an appointment.

She may also choose to pass into the *gym-*

nasium, remaining there for three years, and take her degree *artium* for the University. Where these institutions are not State-supported she will have to pay an annual fee of 250 kroner. Here she is treated as a grown-up and is thrown much into the society of her fellow-pupils of the other sex. The *gymnasium* has a *forening*, or association, whereof the pupils meet every Saturday and speechify and discuss to their hearts' content on the popular topics of the day, winding up the proceedings with a dance, as a sort of fitting commentary, presumably, on the futility of all public discussion. Once a year they give a formal ball, and during the Christmas holidays they have private theatricals, whereat farces of the "Charley's Aunt" genre are much to the fore. The *gymnastik* hall is given to them gratis for their meetings. The examination for *artium* is in its general scheme much on the lines as that for the *middelskole eksamen*, though of course it is a much more serious affair, including, as it does, a little of Cicero, Livius, Tacitus, and others. Her fee to the censors is 40 kroner, though this is not pressed for should she for special reasons petition for a free examination. Having taken her *artium* on July 1 she will be *immatrikulert* at the University on September 2: though this is not necessary; but in

that event she would not be *academicus*. The proper title of the Norwegian University is "*Det Kongelige Fredriks Universtet.*" It was founded on September 2, 1811, and will therefore celebrate its centennial jubilee in this year of grace 1911.

Following the progress of our little heroine we arrive at that stage when, having selected her professor as *privat praeceptor* to see her through all the routine of the University, she attends at noon on *immatrikulering* day clad in white or black, and with her parents, fellow new students, and old students who have celebrated their twenty-five, forty, and fifty years' jubilee as students, takes her seat in the University *fest hal*. Here the Herr Rektor will address her generally on her duties as *akademiker* and present her with the freedom of the University. In the evening the *studenter-samfundet* (Students' Society) gives a fête in honour of the *russen*, or undergraduates, a rather boisterous affair in its way, during which speeches and songs follow one another interminably. "*H.M. Grisen* (His Majesty the Pig)," the mythical patron of the University, is carried in, and in the guise of a golden porker welcomes her and her fellow-students to the University. At midnight she takes her departure, a full-fledged *russen*. There

is an average yearly attendance of 500 new students, of which number 100 are girls. Many of the students of both sexes of course do not remain on at their alma mater, preferring, as they often do, to go in for a shorter cut to wage-earning, and they will therefore elect to enter the technical school or the military school, or an office, or, as is often the case with girls, to become a resident governess. In the last capacity the pay is usually 20 kroner a month, and her position in the house is in every respect that of a lady, an equal, and one of the family.

There are five faculties at the University: *Teologiske fakultet*, *juridiske fakultet*, *medecinske*, *historisk-filosofiske*, and *matematisk-videnskablige fakulteter*—terms which explain themselves. Before our friend can take up one of these *fakulteter* she must pass her examination (two *semester* terms) in *filosofi*—please to observe the phonetic advantages of Norwegian orthography. She inscribes her name in a *protokol*, and duly notifies the *Dekanus* of her choice. The examination is free, but she will have to pay another censorial fee of 40 kroner unless the *akademiske kollegium*, consisting of the Rektor and four professors, decides, on petition, to waive its payment. She then attends lectures

four or five times a week for each subject. The library and reading room of the University, the Botanical garden, and the numerous *samlinger* (meetings) are freely at her disposition. There are several *foreninger* of students. The students' society has its meetings every Saturday for speech-making and discussion, and the Temperance, Religious and Choral Societies of the students have also their weekly meetings. In time she may secure one of the many stipends from the University bequests, amounting to 300 kroner or 400 kroner a year, and she is quite at liberty at any time to earn a living by giving private lessons in German, English, Latin, etc., for which she is usually paid at the rate of a kroner an hour.

She is now in the heyday of the great "one time" of her life. She and her fellow male students are always on the very best of terms, and their periods of study are relieved by frequent walks together, ski tours to Nordmarken, listening to the band in the Royal Park, tobogganning on the Frognersaeter, skating, boating, concerts, lawn tennis, theatres, balls, and possibly (though I am not qualified to judge academically) some small degree of flirting. She may, however, prefer to sit quietly at home and read up for the sterner problem of "bread and butter and how to pro-

vide it," and if she has no home in the town she must put up with a *pensionat*, or a private family, paying 60 kroner or 70 kroner a month for her upkeep. She has two *semesters* a year with examination, from September 15 until Christmas, and from January 15 to June 15.

Finally there is the great summer meeting of the year—the crowning period of her joyous academical life. This generally takes place at some place of national interest, as Eidswold, for instance, and lasts for four days. At these meetings instructive papers are read and discussed. A substantial reduction in railway and steamboat fares is accorded her, and during her four days' stay at the place of meeting she is housed, fed, and entertained for an inclusive fee of 12 kroner. In the afternoon excursions are made to local places of historical or scenic interest, followed by an *al fresco* meal amid sylvan surroundings. These meetings are in a sense Scandinavian, if not European, and are attended by Danes, Swedes, and Finns, though English and other nationalities are always cordially welcomed. There are usually about a hundred women students present, and as many male students, besides clergy and professors, and a genial spirit of camaraderie obtains throughout the entire

function. Verily is it the one great day of all our little friend's days; for here she will have the opportunity of making acquaintances which, as things often turn out, may lead to the one great friendship of her life.

CHAPTER VI

FOOD

NORWEGIAN food will not appeal to the Britisher who objects to the German kitchen and the "greasy kickshaws" of Continentals in general. The Continental, however, likes it, and the German in particular, for its tendencies are all in the direction of the lubricious bakemeats of *das grosse Vaterland.* My own opinion about it is that it is admirably adapted for the premature formation of adipose tissue. That is to say, it is less strength-giving than nourishing. Yet if indulged in with moderation, say no more than three times a day, and from dishes of your own choosing, it is as wholesome and well-tasting a regimen as one can possibly wish to have. I am here alluding, of course, to the food of the towns. That of the cereal-eating peasantry is quite another matter, and should not be taken into general account in this treatise. The Norwegian's opinion about our food and its preparation is pretty much on the lines of most foreign views on the subject.

It is not flattering to our pride of practicalness. Yet he will admit that as a nation we are above all things practical. He makes an exception, however, in the case of our upper middle class cookery, which he says is tolerable enough, if a little wasteful and watery, but that anything beneath that class, in the food line, is beneath contempt. Thus the Norwegian, and he is a good hand at the noble art of hitting back. He is tolerant and non-disputatious to a degree in the presence of the foreigner, but there are limits even to his complaisance, and audible comments on his buttery sauces or the glimpse of a tin of "Keating" will often as not (and very reasonably) send him flying over the line; and then you must read him in the vernacular of his patriotic journals to appreciate your own true nothingness and the vituperative powers of the Dano-Norsk idiom. Therefore must I proceed very cautiously, and with some amount of diffidence; for the way is thorn-full and at times exceeding rough.

I take it that in this matter of food taste, or taste in food, the inherited trend of the individual is the main point governing the dispute. From time immemorial my forebears have been of the flesh-eaters most fleshly, and they have undoubtedly transmitted their carnivorous pre-

judices to me. In Norway I have rebelled against this hereditary instinct, and for years have subsisted among the upland peasantry on a diet of fresh and sour milk, eggs, oatmeal porridge, flat bread and potatoes, with an occasional Sunday reversion to flesh in the form of soup from salted beef or mutton; and I throve and waxed exceeding fat, though not particularly tough, thereon. But the meat hunger was always upon me, and I longed beyond all description for the chop and the steak-and-onions and the cut from the joints which were not. Therefore when I have gone into the towns and put up at the cosy little *privat hotels*, with which Norway abounds, I have telephoned my coming in advance, together with the nature and preparation of the fresh meats which I would expect to find ready for the table on my arrival. And never did meat taste so deliciously, or appear to me to be so strength-imparting, as on those shameful occasions of moral lapse. Certainly the steak, and the chop, contained no fat to speak of, and the leg of mutton was no larger than that of a Southdown lamb, but then the chop and the leg were of the mountain, and the steak was home-bred and killed, which were things to conjure with so far as the appetite was concerned.

Continuing in my downward course, like the drunkard of the tract, I have, then, for a period of fourteen days lived, literally speaking, on the fat of the town, absorbing every diurnal meal, its courses and its side-dishes, without exception or demur, from the early morning *kaffe og kager* to the 10.30 p.m. wine and fruit; and it was all very delightful, if very various, while it lasted. But it produced the inevitable reaction; and I have fled post-haste out to my mountain fastnesses for my eggs, and my milk, and my porridge, and my potatoes: there to revel in them (eschewing all meats, salt or otherwise) until the old hereditary gnawing sent me back into town again for that miserable steak-and-onions and the bottle of *bok öl*—which we call stout.

All of which foregoing is of the nature of a very tactful allegory designed to meet the convictions of meat-eaters and vegetarians alike, without trespassing unduly on the feelings of my worthy old friend the Herr Grosserer.

Therefore is the Norwegian, in his inclination towards the things that are fatty, hereditarily correct; and he is, moreover, correct in his contention that fats in Arctic countries are indispensable for human food. But he has no more right to point the finger of scorn (which he

hardly ever does) at my blue-rare steak than have I to sneer (which I never do) when at Hammerfest he, in the person of a fisherman, drinks me "skaal" in a glass of cod-liver oil.

But to the Britisher who elects to reside in Norway there is always a middle course open—the easiest course in the world. He has only to state what he really wants (in English or in German) in the matter of the meat and vegetables, and their cooking, and he will be catered for at hotel or *pensionat* with unfailing patience and good temper. But he must exercise a similar degree of forbearance when tabulating his requirements or they will not materialize. In Norway, and especially peasant Norway, where time is really of no particular consequence, patience is the one primal virtue, and the father, as it were, of all the others. Any ebullition of temper is considered the worst possible form, and a person so indulging is noted as *vond* (angry)—a term usually applied to a dog or any other animal of uncertain disposition. To be known as *snil* (kind), on the other hand, is a safe passport to the Norwegian's good graces, always provided that you are not *for snil* (too kind) or *alt for snil* (altogether too kind)—terms usually considered to be more referable to a fool, in the comparative and superlative.

Most of the better-class hotels in Norway have already anticipated the Britisher's conservatism on the food question, and have provided for him accordingly; and should he have his own house or flat, he will find that his cook is very amenable to be taught plain English cooking. Then, after a friendly intimidation of the butcher (who has certainly some extraordinary cross-country methods of jointing meat), he will be able, with a little stretch of imagination, to fancy he is at his own table in the old home across the sea.

The chief objection which the touring Briton has to the food of the country is the scarcity of meat and vegetables, and, when met with, the questionable and saucey guises in which they are presented to him; and assuming that he is infallible in his conclusions as to what constitutes a reasonable diet, he is undoubtedly in the right. With the exception of potatoes, which often form the staple of the evening meal, there are practically no vegetables (in the British sense of their uses) to be found among the peasants of the interior. A little cabbage or carrot is occasionally grown for the purposes of the infrequent salt-meat soup; but I have never seen them, or cauliflower, to say nothing of salad or celery, served plain as a separate dish, though I have

reason to believe that I have often partaken of them without having had the faintest conception as to their identity—all inquiry being, from reasons of etiquette, strictly barred. So far as the peasant is concerned, this general lack of green food is absolutely inexcusable, and can be only attributed to an ingrained dislike of anything proximating to luxury. *Il mange mais il ne dine pas* applies with peculiar force to him and his humble table, though it will probably take a few more centuries to awaken him to the significance of the *bon mot.* Though far from having reached the degenerate stage, a large and varied experience of him has convinced me that, to bring him back to his pristine vigour and hardihood, the following three requisites are worthy of his undivided attention: fresh meat and vegetables, a return to his neglected oatmeal porridge, and a better ventilation of his rooms. And when it is considered that he is practically the only raw material of which the cult of the towns is formed, the question is less a provincial than a national one.

There is a belief among Englishmen in the country that after the first three years' residence in Norway the winter cold is borne with less equanimity than that of the first period of domicile; and as a reason for this disability it is

advanced that the predominance of the white foods (fish, pork, veal, etc.), together with the spasmodic supply of green-stuffs, is productive of that poverty of blood which the abundant beefs and muttons and vegetables of his homeland go to obviate. Whether or not this be the case I must leave to the Herr Doktor and the Herr Professor to decide. It has not occurred to me from personal observation that the people of the towns are any less full-blooded than those of, say Germany; though, as in the case of the latter, two-thirds at least of the men one sees about town appear to be a great deal fatter than they have any right to be, and of a fat, moreover, which their own doctors have dubbed *bleg fed* (white fat), which unhealthy condition of obesity is seldom met with among beef-fed Englishmen. A corpulent Norwegian lady, on the other hand, is rather an exception; and this has given occasion to the unkind suggestion of their ungallant country-man that the Norwegian man was over-coddled, over-fed, and entirely spoilt by his self-denying sister, to her own physical detriment, a libel which has just sufficient truth in it to make it all the more libellous. Among the peasants (who could certainly not maintain a "fat man's club") there is a far better case for this theory of poor food and its resultant poverty of

blood. *Blod forgiftning* (blood-poisoning) is very prevalent with them, especially among the *husmaend* and labourers. Whitlow is a common trouble, and any slight scratch or cut on the hand in winter is apt to set up a dangerous inflammation extending to the armpit and necessitating severe operations. The perennial appearance in early spring also of sores at the corner of the mouths of the poorer children —sores which disappear with the better summer food—likewise tells a tale which points its own moral. In many of the off-lying valleys fresh meat is seldom or never eaten, and the only vegetable encouraged is the potato. In these places veal will on rare occasions constitute a day's meal before it is salted down ; but as the calf is frequently killed at an age that is very far removed from discretion, its flesh will not, and does not, appeal to the townsman or the foreigner. The peasant as a rule keeps his cows solely for milking and manurial purposes, and the occasional supply of veal for salting ; and with the exception of a few sheep-breeding districts the latter animal is seldom kept for food alone.

Butter and fresh cream take the place of dripping, and enter largely into the scope of Norwegian cooking. Butter when fresh and good will cost about 11d. a pound, and the best

cream 9d. a *liter*. As one moves away into the interior fresh butter is less in evidence than is margarine, the peasant preferring to sell his butter to the towns and purchase his margarine at anything under 7d. His tastes are always for the things that are not particularly fresh. When thirsty he will infinitely prefer a drink of over-sour milk to that he may at any time obtain direct from his cow, and fresh trout are quickly transferred to the salting tub. This applies equally to his inclinations in the matter of meat, though there are signs of late that he is beginning to appreciate the flesh that is sweet, and the day may yet come when he will eat the game with which his forests abound, instead of sending it into the towns as a sort of offal for debased city taste.

In the meantime the towns benefit by his prejudices in the latter respect. A capercailzie may be had for half-a-crown, and black game at about the same price a pair. Grouse and woodcock average 7d. and 10d. respectively. Thrushes and blackbirds are sold at about the rate of a penny apiece; but when it comes to the lark and the pigeon the Norwegian draws the line, sparing the former for its song and the latter for ornamental purposes. A hare will cost you a kroner (1s. 1½d.), but a wild rabbit cannot

be had for love or money, they, like the English daisy, not being indigenous to the country.

Vegetables are fairly plentiful in the towns, and are considered by Norwegians to be dear enough. They are certainly much dearer in the North than in Southern Norway. Potatoes average about 2d. for 3 kilos, cauliflower from 3d. to 8d. per head. Cabbage, 1½d. to 3½d., and carrots about a penny a bundle. Celery, lettuce, and rhubarb are to be had in their season, as is also *karvekaal*, which is much used in soups. It is a species of wild carraway, and its leaves are gathered on hill and field in the early spring, and dried for yearly use. It is, in my opinion, far superior to spinach when boiled in its native freshness and served with poached eggs, and as an ingredient in soup its delicate mint-like flavour is much appreciated by Scandinavians. Its cultivation for export purposes should be encouraged, for I am certain that it would be appreciated by the British housewife if only as an occasional change from the eternal parsley, mint, and sage of daily use.

Fish, in the tin, and fresh from the river or sea, is, as might be reasonably expected, cheap enough. Soles are not easily to be had, but among the numerous other kinds of flat-fish the large golden flounder, costing about 6d. each, is

much prized. Cod, haddock, and whiting take an easy first place as the staple fish food. Live cod sells at about 4d. a *kilo*, and, when salted, at about half that price. Silver whiting are often retailed at a penny apiece, haddock at 2½d. and 3½d. a pound, and fresh mackerel from a penny to 3d. apiece, according to size. You can get seven large-sized fresh herrings for a penny, and, when salted, a fine specimen for a halfpenny. Fresh salmon varies very much in price, ranging as it does from 8d. to 2s. 3d. a pound, but the smoked fish usually maintains its price at about 10d. a pound. Peasants as a rule prefer to dispose of their salmon catches in rivers and along the coasts to a local company for export, and as most of the best rivers are let to Englishmen and others, this fish is less in general evidence at table than it otherwise might be. Trout fishing in the numberless brooks, rivers, and lakes of Norway being practically free to one and all, the fish is an inexpensive and frequent summer commodity in town and country.

Turbot, for some strange reason, not unconnected probably with its warty and general unlovely appearance, is not a favourite in the market. Whether or not it is considered to be of the category of the devil-fish, and unclean, I cannot say; but I have a vivid recollection of

inducing fishermen, not so many years ago, to *give* them to me rather than throw them overboard, and even at this date they may be had for a mere song. There is no accounting for the vagaries of a people's taste in such matters. Kidneys, for instance, are considered in the light of offal, and I have never paid my butcher anything for them, nor for liver, nor sweetbread. Sheeps' heads and brains are anathema, though pigs' feet are, in a small way, a marketable commodity. Mushrooms, other than the champignon of the bottle, are regarded also with the gravest suspicion, and the peasant's aversion to game of any kind is notorious.

Halibut at about 9d. a *kilo* is much eaten by the working classes, as is also *ludfisk*, though the latter is likewise much favoured among the "upper ten." Indeed, it is as indispensable on the table at Christmas Eve as is our turkey or plum-pudding. And of all the British-contemned dishes of Norway I don't suppose there are any that have been so gratuitously abused as the harmless, if unnecessary, *ludfisk*. It is in reality dry salt cod which has been soaked for about eight days in a lye, or potash, from birchwood, and then boiled. It is served up hot, and eaten with the usual sauce of melted butter. In its cooked state it presents a semi-transparent and

gelatinous appearance, and its taste is really not at all bad when you have overcome the notion that you are dealing with putrid fish—which it is not. But the odour which it emits during the boiling process, to say nothing of the after-smell—a sort of "choke-damp" as it were—has effectually damned it in the eyes, or rather the nose, of the Britisher, and rarely will he tolerate its preparation in his kitchen for the use of his servants. It is usually retailed at 2d. or 3d. a pound. In the same category, and from a similar exotic point of view, the *gammel ost* (old cheese) may be safely placed; for it is a comestible that has furnished as much food for depreciatory fun as the famous, or infamous, *Limburger* of the American humorist. Yet it is, in my opinion, no worse than *Roquefort* in its more advanced period of life. It is merely an ordinary cheese, made from ordinary cows' milk, and kept for an extraordinary length of time. The legend that peasants bury it under the threshold of their doors and keep it there until it is impossible for any person to enter the house, when it is considered to be ripe, has no foundation in fact—chiefly because it would never occur to a Norwegian peasant to bury it at any time. It is a common object on all hotel and *pensionat* tables, and I have yet to learn that its presence

has produced any disruptive effect on the company assembled. It is so very easy to be funny at the expense of cheeses—of the maturer brands.

Returning to our fish, it should be mentioned that if one lives near the sea (where everybody who is anybody in Norway usually resides) your summer supply need cost you no more than the time and trouble in getting it. On the more populous south and south-east coasts there is practically no tide, and very little current to speak of. In summer your boat, steam launch, or yacht are always to be found floating where you left them, and fish abound literally up to your very door. I have often, seated in a basket-chair on the lawn, within a few yards of the hall door, caught all the whiting, flounder, and even cod necessary for the day's supply to the household, and my average daily take one summer in a neighbouring creek, resorted to by fish as a feeding ground, was six dozen of all sorts, among which haddock and the silver whiting predominated: and this within a stone's-throw of the cliffs, in fifteen fathoms of water, and very often without once having shifted my ground.

It will be readily surmised that with so bountiful a supply of fish the poor (who are never so poor that they cannot possess, or borrow, a boat—I have seen second-hand and serviceable

prams change hands for six shillings) have all the fresh fish they want either for the home or for sale. Many better-class families residing in good fishing districts keep a standing supply of live cod in large perforated wooden cases. The latter are taken up out of the sea by hand or by a winch from their boat-piers, and the fish are fed daily until they are required; and so tame and used to the new life do some of the earlier lodgers become that I have seen them readily swim up and take the food from the hand held under the water. When fish is required the owner has only to step down to his private pier at the end of his garden, haul up his weighted box, select his cod and take it out with a hand-net, alive and fresh for the table.

During the winter season, when the fjords are frozen over, the poorer classes on the coast engage in line-fishing for herring and cod. A canvas weather-shield, or tent, is erected on the ice, a hole is made in the latter, and a line with a dozen or more bright and *unbaited* hooks is lowered. The upper end of the line is secured to a supple twig set in the ice, whose office it is to indicate when a bite occurs. As many as a dozen herrings are often hauled out at one time, with possibly a large cod dangling from an occasional baited hook. Needless to say that

this fishing is free to native and foreigner alike.

Fresh fish is plainly cooked and well served in all hotels, *pensionats*, and private houses. Cod, haddock, and salmon are usually sent to the table plain, with a separate sauce of good melted butter—the first two often appearing at other times as a *kedjeree*. Whiting, flounder, herring, and mackerel, when not boiled, are fried in the usual way, with this exception, that only the best butter is used in the process, the same butter appearing separately afterwards as a sauce. The Norwegian cook (almost always a woman) is an adept in her treatment of fish, and, so far as that comestible is concerned, the Britisher can have no solid grounds for grumbling. Nor should her soups fail to appeal to his palate. But he must put up with the absence of clear soups, which are considered to be too watery for Norwegian taste. The chief ingredients of Norwegian soups are stock, flour, butter, an egg, and a couple of spoonfuls of good cream; and they are equally applicable for asparagus soup, cauliflower soup, champignon, and even lobster soup. The latter crustacean and crabs are of the good things that are far cheaper than with us, but oysters, alas! do not belong to the category.

Beef and mutton are retailed in the towns at about 7½d. a pound, and pork, which is considered very dear (though a universal favourite), at 9d. About the cooking of these and their sauces the Britisher, fresh from the home methods of his own country, will have a good deal to say that will not be flattering to the Norwegian *cuisine*. He will probably tell you that the joint in its entirety is never in evidence upon the table; that the dishes and plates are not heated to the burning-point standard of his native land; that the meat is brought in luke-warm, in gobbets, and baked, or fried, or boiled to shreds; and that all this, together with the non-nutritious and bile-inducing properties of the sauces and the numberless cold side-dishes, leave him, after the meal, with a general feeling as of not having got any "forrarder," in other words, that there is a lack of finality about the whole thing to which his national sense of solidity objects. Granted, for the sake of argument, if not peace, that his experiences have been confined to a class of hostelries catering solely for a native *clientèle*, and with a proper allowance for some measure of national spleen, the interests of truth compel me to admit that, from his point of view, there is possibly some basis of fact in his contention. The only consolation that I can

offer to him is that already given in the earlier portion of this chapter, viz., that if he confine his attentions to first-class hotels both in town and country, and state his case with courtesy, he will find that his homely wants (with due consideration for the wants of other nationalities) will be carefully considered and provided for.

CHAPTER VII

FOOD (*continued*)

THE Britisher who takes England with him during his travels abroad is often puzzled how to discriminate at first hand between the ways and means of the foreigner as opposed to those of his own country. Then the differences (or the deficiencies, as he will call them) begin to dawn upon him with an ever-increasing sense of irritation that culminates and explodes to the general discomfort of all concerned. It is better to avoid, or rather to forestall, these syncopal attacks by a special system of pre-applied philosophy, which, if you are not already cognisant of it, I will now proceed to expound. It occurred to me one day in the train between Ostend and Brussels, as I sat staring at the landscape sliding by, and wondering in a vague kind of way why the surroundings should appear to be so English and yet remain so very un-English. I will inquire into this matter, thought I, and find out for myself the wherein and why of the anomaly. And I found them. Here

there were no old timber, no hedges, no bracken, and no brier; and there was not a solitary old thatched cottage in sight. Incidentally, the roads, which were paved throughout, were as correct and determinate as Martian canals. This was sufficient as a basis. I then set to work to solve the reason of the topographical omissions, and succeeded in doing so to my own very great satisfaction, all with the exception of the thatched cottages, for which I had quite a number of hypotheses, and to which I propose to return some day when I have not got anything better to do. But I had arrived sufficiently far to feel convinced that there was a good and sufficient reason for all apparent shortcomings, and that here was a branch of, let us call it comparative philosophy, which was admirably calculated to preserve the temper, and inform the mind. Thus, when at a German hotel recently I ordered some sandwiches, and was presented instead with an assortment of pictorial postcards on a tray, the pleasure I immediately felt in tracing the want of connection to the similarity of *illustrirtes brödchen* to *illustirte*—with the *karte* left out—quite did away with any feeling of irritation which the *non sequitur* might otherwise have induced.

The foregoing is, of course, equally applicable

to the Norwegian, his manners and customs, and, above all, his public table. Taking your seat at the latter you will at once observe that your knife and fork, and possibly your spoon, are resting on your plate, and having hastily uncrossed them (if you are superstitious) you will note that this custom arises from the number of glasses and side dishes which are claiming their place in your immediate neighbourhood. You will find no bread in your napkin; because the former, if cut into chunks, as with us, would be quite unsuited to the proper manipulation of the wafer-like *hors d'œuvres*, and there is, moreover, a sufficient supply of sliced bread, in all conscience, throughout the length and breadth of the table. The *hors d'œuvres* are of course all right, according to their peculiar lights, especially the tiny, transparent slices of smoked salmon, and the bay-soaked anchovy of the miniature barrel; but you are not disposed to treat with fishes that have not been promptly evicted from their tins, and herein you are indubitably in the right. Yet if you apply the comparative test hereinbefore mentioned, you will remember that cases of ptomaine poisoning have never arisen in this connection with fresh tinned fishes of Norwegian production, and on second consideration you will probably begin to nibble at your sardines, or

your herrings, in good olive oil, with an ever-increasing confidence.

I have dealt with the soup at an earlier stage. You will find it most palatable; and if you are very hungry, which is the normal condition in Norway, you may pass your plate for a second or even a third helping with the easy conscience of a Middlewick, and without the loss of social prestige which that breezy old gentleman's demands produced upon the servants. The boiled cod, fresh, crisp, smoking hot, and in easily detachable portions, is likewise unimpeachable, as are also the plain boiled and floury potatoes, and sauce of the purest melted butter. The absence of the joint from the table will not have affected your equanimity to any appreciable extent; because, fortified, like the Buddhist, by your new sense of solitary and sublime detachment, you will have observed that there is no one at the head or the foot of the table who could carve a joint to save his life, that joints are never reproduced in the cold stage in Norway, and that, after all, it is good when you are hungry to be able to begin upon something that might otherwise have been unduly delayed under the hands of an indifferent carver. Of course it will be only British, and human, to revert in thought for a second to your last "market ordinary" at

Southampton, with its array of steaming joints and plainly cooked vegetables, and the rose-cheeked farmer at the head of the table operating on the goose with the quick, sure wrist of a qualified surgeon. Nevertheless you will not reject the large dish of fried lamb cutlets held over your shoulder so invitingly by the blue-eyed maid of the mountains, nor the diminutive slices of roast beef, or mutton, packed together like fallen rows of dominoes, nor the Irish stew, nor the lobscouse, and certainly not the roast grouse, capercailzie, blackgame, and mallard. None of these latter have been soused in sauces, and you may therefore enjoy their pristine flavours with, or without, recourse to their numerous attendant sauce-boats. But among these last you will search in vain for onion sauce and bread sauce, to say nothing of the sauce of the horse-radish; though in your new condition of mind you will most probably not care. The prevailing sentiment in the matter of sauces appears to be confined to butter, cream, and flour, with a flavouring of wine. But of course there are the numerous fruit jellies to be resorted to as an auxiliary corrective, should the viands, or their sauces, prove unduly rich.

And so we come to the vegetables. The potatoes are again brought in plain boiled—never

mashed, or in their jackets—and you will again accept them on sight. Not so the cabbage and the cauliflower, if they are really cabbage and cauliflower, which you are strongly inclined to doubt; for they are so be-mashed and emburied in their sauces that it would puzzle even their parent seeds to recognize them again. But you are now of an open mind in these matters, and you will just try a little—a very little—of this alleged cabbage (or is it cauliflower?). You do so, and arrive at the conclusion that your previous rejection of the dish was quite unjustifiable: *ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute*: which is equally true of a sauce or a shower-bath. You inquire of your neighbour whom you met on the boat that morning if biliousness and indigestion are very prevalent in Norway. He answers and informs you that, in so far as he is aware, these maladies are absolutely unknown in Norway, and you then ask him to pass you the cabbage, and that other dish, whatever it may be, and help yourself recklessly. Your temerity is rewarded by the appearance of the blue-eyed one with a dish of boiled peas (you have already eaten and enjoyed their stewed pods in disguise), and when she afterwards presents you with another vegetable dish containing boiled macaroni you further rise to the

occasion by sending her empty and delighted away.

You will find the salt at your side in that little glass container with the silver castor on top. But what about the mustard? Like most Britons, you are not favourably disposed towards the French variety, of which there are a vast number of jars with their ill-fitting and smeary corks. You look into the cruet-stand and find a long glass containing a quantity of—mustard-powder! You feel sorry for the blue-eyed one when it is discovered, as it must be sooner or later, that she has forgotten to mix the mustard, and you covertly return the glass to its place, resolving, for her sake, to get on as well as you can without that condiment. But now your neighbour of the boat asks you for the cruet, and, removing a portion of the powder with a spoon, proceeds to mix it in the gravy on his plate. Here is a revelation! possibly a discovery of great public importance. You do so likewise, but with a result that is of the most ghastly; and you are about to dismiss the subject of mustard entirely from your mind when your neighbour remarks: "Perhaps the Herr Englaender would prefer his mustard *à l'anglais*," and hands you another cruet, in which you find your Colman prepared in the only way in which it may

be prepared, and you are of course highly pleased.

The bread is quite to your taste. There is a great variety of it: delicious, queer-shaped little French rolls, and circular slices of rye bread, the national bread of the country, and there are biscuits galore. You have likewise nothing to allege against the Pontet Canet, the Beaune, or even the Liebfrauenmilch, all of them safe enough ventures in the wine department. But once having tasted Norwegian beer you will, as others of your countrymen before you, prefer it to all imported beverages, and your experience of German beer will support you in your future asseveration that Frydenlund's *pilsneröl* will hold its own against the very best beers the Vaterland may brew. It is moreover always supplied to you at an ice-cold temperature, in the hottest of weathers, on land or fjord. As you happen to be dining at a hotel, you are not under any special obligation to "skaal" with anybody, except, perhaps, your neighbour of the boat, a merciful dispensation, for which you cannot be sufficiently grateful. For this custom (like the thatched-cottage crux) has never been quite amenable to my philosophic test, and up to the moment of writing I have always regarded it as an unmitigated bore.

The puddings will not interest you unduly,

because, like myself, you look upon them as rather an anti-climax to a good dinner. But taste them and see how good they really are. They mostly run, as you will observe, to blanc-manges and variant offshoots of that popular food, with an abundance of whipped cream and jellies. That violet-coloured composition in the circular glass dish is a very common form of Scandinavian pudding. It is composed of sago, with a little flour and the juice of the bilberry, and should be eaten with sugar and cream. They treat their rhubarb in much the same way, mashing it up finely and stewing it to the consistency of a porridge. Candidly I do not care for it in that guise, and consider the English method infinitely preferable. Pies! you will not meet with a pie-crust in all Scandinavia. I quite agree with you that this is a very strange thing; for the light flaky pastry of the Norwegian *konditori*, or cake-shop, is not to be surpassed in Paris itself. True talk; it *is* essentially a country for the boy, with a boy's healthy appetite. Permit me to commend to your suffrages that yellow-tinted substance of the consistency and general appearance of a porridge. As a matter of fact it is a porridge, made from the *moltebaer* (the Norwegian cloud-berry) and is known as *moltegröd*—cloud-berry porridge. You will not often meet with it on the

tables of South Norway, although the berry itself is common enough on all mountain plateaux throughout the country. But north of the Dovre Fjeld the gathering of the *moltebaer* is a source of considerable income to the *bonde*, and the *gröd* itself is much prized in those northern latitudes. The berries are boiled without sugar or other ingredients, to obviate fermentation, and then put into casks, where they will keep indefinitely; the porridge being afterwards eaten with plenty of sugar and cream. I know of nothing to approach it, of its kind, for piquant delicacy of flavour, unless it be strawberries and cream; although the price asked for the former (80 kroner a barrel) would seem to be a great point in its favour, together with its especial advantage of being perennial.

You were obviously a little restive at first in the immediate presence of some fourteen cheeses, and with some show of reason (I have even seen a fellow-countryman ostentatiously remove the whole consignment to a sideboard before he condescended to take his place in offended state at the *table d'hôte*); but, believe me, they are all very innocuous—even to the venerable *gammel ost*, when you have, in a manner of speaking, become acclimatized to it—and they are really exceptionally well-tasting. I am quite at one

with you that, like children, they might create a better impression by being brought to the table at a later stage, but in your new condition of mind, which is nothing if not transcendental, you will have made due allowance for the Norseman's almost mouse-like predilection to cheese—as evidenced by his frequent incursions in that domain, and at times which you might otherwise have considered quite uncalled for. You saw your neighbour on the fjordal boat demand and consume six large *Schweitzer ost* sandwiches with the coffee that was supplied to him at 6 A.M.; and at the ensuing breakfast, at 8.30 A.M., he had pounced upon and devoured a portion of *gjed ost* before you had even unfolded and adjusted your napkin. In the intervals before lunch, dinner, and supper he had further recourse to cheese sandwiches with his frequent beers and coffees, and you are not so certain but that you heard him order a final portion of *Hollandske ost* for midnight consumption in the privacy of his cabin. For which reason you were not at all discomposed when, during the waiting intervals at dinner, he toyed with the *gammel ost*, and expressed his well-bred surprise at your lack of emulation. These cheeses are almost all of them native, and come in large quantities from the mountain *soeters*, where they are prepared by the

blue-eyed one's sister. There is one variety which I would particularly recommend for *fjeld* tours where the distances are far and uncertain between meal and meal, and a light haversack is the main consideration. It is a *gjed ost*, or goats' cheese, of a white species, and is sold in large circular discs. In texture it is soft, and even pliant, and its flavour benign almost to insipidity when compared with that of our Stiltons or Cheddars; but its staying properties are prodigious, and a chunk in your pocket will outlast four times its weight in the chocolate so much affected by the mountain-climbing fraternity. The peasant eats it *au naturel*, cutting it into slices and buttering it as he would bread, and I have taken his word for it that the flavour of the cheese is thereby considerably improved.

If you are a fruit-lover you will have a rare choice of selection from the profusion of good things so invitingly displayed before you. There you have apples, pears, apricots, bananas, and, as we are in the middle of the fruit season, cherries black and red, strawberries, raspberries, and gooseberries of every variety. Pardon me if I venture to anticipate your emotional remark in this connection. What a country, you would exclaim, for the pies, the tartlets, and the preserves of our grandmothers, if only this problem

of the pie-crust were satisfactorily solved! And I am heartily with you in the sentiment; though I am inclined to the opinion that this solution will not be arrived at while wood fuel is generally employed for baking purposes, owing to the difficulty of maintaining that equable temperature which the costlier use of coal alone can produce. This applies in a greater degree to the demands of the oven for the proper dealing with fowls and joints, as well as the slow fire necessities of the entrées and the perfect stew. But the Norwegian is well satisfied with things as they are, and of all the peoples of Europe I don't suppose there are any who have been less influenced by foreign innovations in the domain of the *cuisine*.

The coffee is usually served in the general room, or *salon*; though there is probably no room in the house wherein its consumption would meet with objection. It is a good coffee, indeed a perfect coffee, and its excellent qualities (owing chiefly to its peculiar methods of preparation and the absence of chicory) are as justly renowned as the best which the Turk or the Frenchman—*pace* the British housewife—may produce; and these admirable qualities are more or less uniform in palace or hut. In Norway you will not ask

your servant to make you, or get you, or even prepare you a cup of coffee. You will desire that she will be kind enough to *koge* (boil) you a cup of coffee, which she literally does, having first ground the berry in a mill of a far coarser gauge than is employed in the home country. The berry usually preferred is that of Java, and is retailed at about 1s. 4d. a pound. (I have observed that you do not follow the general example of adding cream to your coffee, and in this you are most wise;) because home experiences have long since taught you that cream, or milk in your coffee immediately after dinner, will spell indigestion as inevitably as a reclining position in one of those many cosy, slope-backed fauteuils. Therefore café noir and a straight-backed chair, by all means. You may ask for and get a cup of tea, of sorts, if your taste is inclined that way; which it will not be if you are at all a man of affairs. Besides, and between ourselves and the table leg, the Norwegian methods of brewing tea are only as yet in the adolescent stage. I would be therefore loath (and I am certain the blue-eyed one would take it grievously to heart) to see your newly acquired philosophy unduly strained by the possible advent of a drowned teapot. You will therefore, having well and wisely dined (thanks to my altruistic

good offices), select a cigar from the box of "Mild Hindoos" which the blue-eyed one has found for you, and ask her, in a not too colloquial English, to bring you a list of the wines.

CHAPTER VIII

MISTRESS AND MAID

THE raw material of which the Norwegian servant-girl, or *tjeneste pige*, is formed is exclusively bucolic. The town-born variety, unlike our cockaignes, is seldom to be found in the second and third generation, and, like the latter, she is what she is from no motive of choice. When she carries her box into her father's *sluffe*, or country sleigh, and sets out with tight lips and an aching heart to face the devil of the towns and all his works, I fancy marriage and a home of her own is oftener the object than a mere wish to ride in a train, perambulate the streets, or gaze upon the sea. There was a time when she might, of her Viking instincts, have desired to see these things, if only to compare their actualities with the blurred woodcuts of her school reader; but she was a child then, with ideas of home and children limited to some broken crockery-ware in an egg-box, some half-a-dozen pine cones to represent cows, and the whole presided over

by a horrible-looking effigy of her potential son and heir. Heaven knows she is leaving little enough behind her now to pull at her heart-strings, if we set aside the abiding love of home the Norsewoman carries with her to the uttermost ends of the earth; for the inevitable, the dreaded, has happened, as in the nature of things heritable it was bound to happen: her eldest brother has taken unto himself, and his sister's home, a wife—a stranger from a distant commune—and she must therefore pull herself together, being fully fledged, for the far flight that may never more wheel to the homing. Her accomplishments are various, if Homeric, of their kind. She can boil coffee, bake flat-bread, cook a porridge or a potato, scour a floor and any number of kettles and pans very exhaustively, perform the household wash-ing—minus the starching, for which there is no special demand—saw and split firewood, spin and weave, garner the produce of the fields, and, of course, shepherd and milk cows as one to the manner born. But her burden of in- and outdoor duties have left her little time to cultivate a knowledge of *la grande cuisine*, and the more advanced fields of stitchery (even if there were any local demand for it, which there is not); and as we now find her she



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would prove far more serviceable to others in an American boarding-house, or as the wife of some distant cousin in the Norse colonies of Minnesota or North Dakota, than in her native towns. But she has decided upon the latter for the time being, and will only set out upon the long *trek*, the *trek* that will take her from her incomparable Noreg (Norway) unto all time, as a last resource of pre-marital despair. Her educational equipment, as furnished by the free school of her village, is fairly good when the distractive intervals of potato-setting and harvesting is taken into consideration. She can read her *risgmaal* (the language of town culture), and the *landsmaal* (the dialect of the country), passing well, and if when writing to a friend she should happen to mix the two up with her *bygdemaal* (the patois of her hamlet), and offer him *godt* (good) in the guise of *gaat*, or *got*, it will not much matter, as the phonetic tendencies of the three *maals* will render the word easily negotiable. Her knowledge of arithmetic is shrewd, if elemental, being derived less from the ministrations of her school-teacher than the memorative requirements of practical shopping. Globe-trotters in a hurry have written her down lethargic in appearance, stolid of temperament, blunt, honest, and of some religious cast of mind,

and the description must serve for the text-books if only for its facile cocksuredness. Yet little enough did they divine of her true nature beneath this mask of stolidity and lethargy—a guise always assumed before the blatant stranger, to be instantly thrown aside at the approach of the tried friend. What knew they of her innate sense of fun, or the hidden, inarticulate strain of poetry and romance, so rarely revealed in the purple passages of her infrequent scrawls? Her heart is big, 'tis true, and the item might well have been catalogued under her shortcomings, but believe me, all you hasty ones, it can do a heap of aching.

She has no difficulty in finding a situation, which at first, and in nine cases out of ten, will be on a neighbouring farm; for she still values the freedom of a service that admits of her going and coming without question, provided always she has performed her duties for the day. It has reached her ears that urban matrons have peculiar views on these matters, with still more peculiar ordinances governing them, and she will check, times out of number, before she takes the final plunge. But our little *gaardmandsdatter* (farmer's daughter) has been visited by a female cousin in metropolitan service; a cousin so bewilderingly hatted, bloused, and gowned, that

she had incontinently laid aside her pretty national dress of the centuries to "try on" the meretricious confection of the hour, and had, there and then, decided for the town.

The town matron, her future mistress, has, in the meanwhile, been advertising for just such a raw hand to take the place of the finished article —who is about to reward her for her years of tuition by marrying the *gaardsgut* (yard man) from over the way. It is amusing to note with what frankness the reasons for a girl's leaving is set forth in the public papers, all of course with a view to allaying the possible suspicions of intending applicants for the situation. Marriage and sickness are among the usual forms of misadventure set forth—and truthfully stated, or the servants concerned would not be a party to them.

Our applicant's references having been provisionally approved, she comes to town to interview her potential mistress, and creates, let us say, a favourable impression. If the period of service of the present girl has some weeks, or even months, still to run, and the applicant decides on taking her place, she accepts from her future mistress a kroner or two as *faeste penge* (earnest money), wherewith she is as legally and irrevocably bound to service as the yokel

who takes his shilling from the beribboned sergeant of Trafalgar Square. If the position should be vacant she enters upon her work at once, and finds, if she is at all tractable and her mistress reasonable, that she might have gone further and fared worse. At first her pay will be small enough. During her fifth wheel period it may range at about 10 kroner a month, and will not even in her finished stage much exceed 15 kroner. But in exceptional circumstances the latter may attain to 20 kroner; and where an all-round good servant has been taken to a mining or other camp in out-of-the-way inland districts, she may ask and get as much as 35 kroner a month and her keep. This may seem to her a great deal; but when she remembers that she has to pay 10 per cent. of it in taxes to the local commune, and that her countrywomen in America can obtain a wage of 120 kroner a month, it is not to be wondered at that she is still asking for more, if not agitating for a uniform 20 kroner standard in the home country. The apparent opulence of the fashionably dressed shop-girl has also aroused some measure of envy in her otherwise immune breast, a feeling which has not infrequently led her to try her hand at the former profession, very often with futile not to say disastrous results.

Returning to our little protegée, it will be necessary, if painful, to state that if the household be a small one her inexperience will necessitate her mistress taking upon herself the lion's share of the work. But the girl is (as are all Norwegian servants, with rare exceptions) willing enough to learn, and unlike our more specialized Belindas, she will do whatever may be required of her with the best of good humour and personal interest. In a poor and ultra-democratic country such as Norway, where the motto "United we stand and divided we fall" is referable not only to the State but to the home circle itself, there is, as between master and servant, a degree of familiarity so nicely balanced as to be impossible even of conception in an Anglo-Celtic community. A *husmand's* daughter, and therefore of the least account in the land, will be treated as a social equal on the farms of her native valley. She takes her seat at the family table, and her food from the common dish, calling her master Johan and her mistress Marta without fear or compunction. But there is one thing she will know better than to do. She will not, of her wildest imaginings, set her cap at Thorvald, her master's son and heir. And of good cause; for, were she to do so, the old *bonde* of ancient *aet* (lineage) would instantly throw off his

disguise and reveal himself to her as he latently is, a port-soaked old Tory of the crustiest and most aristocratic type. It is the Herr Grosserer, his *pigelil*, and the *bonde* lieutenant of cavalry all over again. But with a difference. The Herr Grosserer may see fit to unbend—the *bonde* never.

The situation forms the stock plot of many a Norwegian romancist whom I know well, though for the purposes of better effect the *husmand's* son is usually substituted for the *husmand's* daughter, and the *bonde's* daughter for the *bonde's* son—a distinction without the least shade of social difference, as the *husmand's* son soon finds to his cost when he aspires to the hand of his master's daughter. Of course the infuriated father kicks him out of doors forthwith, and the much-wronged hero proceeds to work his passage out to North Dakota, or Minnesota, or thereabouts. But his Sigrid, or Solveig, or Astrid remains true to the *husmand's* son of her heart, despite the drunken attentions of her mercenary father's choice. After three long years, and eight chapters, have rolled heavily by, during which the hero has become a millionaire and the heroine's father a pauper in expectancy, a fur-coated and begemmed stranger enters the old *bonde's* house at the psychical moment when the auctioneer's hammer is about to transfer it (and

the appurtenances thereof) to his drunken rival, and acquires the home, the estate, the daughter, and the old *bonde* by a prodigious, if quite unnecessarily high, bid. It is a pretty plot—a very excellent plot—and I commend it to the serious consideration of our dramatists in search of material.

At first our *pige* from the country finds her position irksome enough, longs for home, and even has vague plans in formation for bolting at the first favourable opportunity. But her mistress, a very wily old (or young) lady of the world, knows her from top to toe, and sets to work at once to put her at her ease. She takes her under a sort of benevolent, if not motherly, guardianship, lends a sympathetic ear to her sorrows, and applies the balm of wise, if rather worldly counsel to the kibes of the big fretting heart. The girl's wardrobe is taken under her special care, and she sees to it that she is provided with a suitable frock to replace the national costume which (and here she is a little uncertain) is—er—hardly the thing for indoor town wear. All this, with a subsequent visit to the costumier and a few hints as to the proper method of getting upstairs without tumbling over her new skirt, puts matters on quite a comfortable footing, and over her cup of coffee and

cheese sandwiches in that almost palatial kitchen she comes to the happy conclusion that life after all may have its roseate side if only we will take things as they come. She has, moreover, not been asked to wear a cap. She had dreaded the assumption of this pestilent badge of service and servitude, and like all her sister servants had fully made up her mind to resist its emplacement to the last of her powers. She has no objection to the usual light-coloured blouse and dark skirt of service, or even the prettily-embroidered bib and apron of high occasions ; but she draws the line at the cap, small or large, frilled or plain, and don't talk to her about streamers. Her thick long plaits of flaxen hair are brushed out and affixed to the crown of her head with circular combs, and she is duly initiated in the necessary occultisms for the maintenance of the superstructure in place. To be sure the combs are a sore trial to her at first, and are always fetching away and dangling about her ears whenever she is in motion ; but this eccentricity, together with that of the self-opening blouse, and the skirt that won't close, are overcome in time, and in less than a fortnight she can walk the streets of a Sunday evening with the best of them. She was certainly surprised, though of course, highly pleased, at the courteous, almost deferent recog-

nition of her presence by the master of the house, and his sons and daughters. In similar circumstances the male members of a *bonde* family would have taken less notice of her than they would of the cat. So flustered was she by the unwonted procedure that she was on the point of returning their friendly *du*, when the enormity of the thing as previously set forth by her mistress prevented her in the very nick of time from committing herself. "You must always," she had been told, "say *de* in this house when addressing or answering the members of the family and visitors. We of the household may alone employ the *du* among ourselves, our intimate friends, and servants—in this case yourself: reserving the *de* for strangers and acquaintances." The anomaly does not quite appeal to the girl from the country, where, of course, they are all *dus* to one another as a matter of ancient custom, and to her last day she fails to understand why, at a dinner party, her master should *du* his right-hand guest and *de* the lady or gentleman on his left. "If I were the party *de'd*," she has been heard to remark to a fellow-servant in an interval of comparative gossip, "I shouldn't like it in the least—should you?"

In the course of time she relieves her mistress of her tutorial labours, and if the establishment

consist of not more than four or five persons, is able, with a little extraneous help on special occasions, to take upon herself the entire cooking, waiting, washing, bed-making, and general cleaning requirements of the house.

She welcomes the presence of her mistress, or any other privileged person, in the kitchen at all times. Indeed, the more the merrier would seem to be her axiom in this respect. That apartment is in a way a place of call for all and sundry who may have the faintest possible excuse for calling. There you will find the grocer's boy, the town messenger, the man who brought the firewood, the cousin in service (with her young man, out of service) spending her leisure interval serving her cousin; the reduced widow consuming her eleemosynary cup of coffee and cheese sandwich at the corner of the dresser, the gipsy-woman who foretold her amazing good fortune, and the occasional dog who took a fancy to her bright face in the street and followed her home — all of them entering and re-entering and hampering her movements in a way that would send the average London cook into the drawing-room with her notice on the spot. But her mistress does not mind it—she is, indeed, part and parcel of the sentiment responsible for it—and I am positively certain her maid enter-

tains no objection to the traffic. Why should she when the conviviality of these occasions all make for the advent of the hour and the man?

During her first year's service her financial status, as might be imagined, is not a very flourishing one. Frocks and lingerie, in the towns, run into a deal of money as compared with the home-woven and home-made clothing of her village; and if "pappa" at home is in bad circumstances, and the *landhandler*, or village store-keeper, a little pressing, the greater portion, if not the whole, of her small wages will go to his rescue as a matter of course. Were statistics ever forthcoming of the monthly sums transmitted in this connexion, they would form an eloquent commentary on the Norwegian daughter's fidelity, and her sentiments on the home question. Her father is to her, let him be what he may—good, bad, or hopelessly indifferent—her life and her law, and rash indeed would be the young girl who decided for America without the consent of this often impossible old "Pappa" sitting at home at her cost. "Poor old man!" she will exclaim, with kindling eyes and mantling cheek, when you tax her with her presumed thriftlessness, "he has laid out many a ten-kroner bill for me in his

time, and why shouldn't I do as much for him now?" and it would be impolitic, if not cruel, to gainsay her. But of course she has always a few *öre* (farthings) put by for the *konditori* on occasion, or even the Cinema (an astonishing revelation to her), where, on her Sunday evening "outs," you may often see her in hysterical laughter at the man with the vanishing hat, or in a luxury of tears at the atrocious proceedings of the villain of the play.

She has plenty of opportunities for taking the air. She is given a half-holiday every week, and may have an occasional evening out for the asking, provided she do so with any claim to reason. If there are other servants in the house these intervals may be, by arrangement, more frequent. Her mistress is complaisant to a fault on that point. Yet where their sympathies are mutual, and the law of give and take obtains, there is no hitch in the routine work of the day. If the children are many, and of a helpless age, a nurse-girl (at a lesser wage) is required to attend to them and take them out for an airing; but the house is never troubled by the presence of the foster-mother. The Norwegian mother of high or low degree invariably attends to that department herself, and the *nourice* has no status in the land.

A certain casual way of doing things (as hinted at in the hospitalities of kitchen) might seem to point to the irregular appearance of the meals at the table; but such is not the case. Breakfast by instalments, and in the dressing-gown, as on the Continent, is not countenanced by the Norwegian housewife. That meal, as well as the several others indulged in during the day, must be on the table and partaken of at the *klokke slet* (literally, the stroke of the clock). So grounded is the girl in a methodical and ultra-detailed system of preparing and serving the meals to stated times, that no amount of hurried exhortation (which only throws her into a helpless condition of fluster) will induce her to hasten the proces by a second. The peculiarity is national, and tourists have been unduly disturbed by it when, regardless of coming or departing trains or boats, and frantic appeals to "hurry up!" and "look lively there!" the girl has proceeded on the even tenor of her routine way, rather than have her reputation ruined by the production of an undraped tray, or the absence of sauces and condiments, which, in the desperate circumstances of the moment, were really not required. If you are, therefore, of a hasty temperament, and *will* have an occasional coffee and sandwich out of hours, you must be

either prepared to wait patiently for them, or do as I (Heaven pardon me!) have so often done, rushed into the kitchen and, despite her alarmed protests, helped myself. Bread and butter in Norwegian, by the way, is *smörrebröd*—literally, buttered bread; but it is not so in effect. If you order some *Smörrebröd*—bread and butter, *bien entendu*—you will be given meat or cheese sandwiches. So to be clearly understood on the point you shall order "*Smör og bröd, uden paalaeg*"—butter and bread without impositions.

In the progress of time our servant girl may, for reasons that seldom transpire (she is as close as the proverbial nut) desire a change, and having once made up her mind on that point nothing on earth will prevent her from leaving. Her terms of service may be monthly, quarterly, half-yearly, or even yearly, but the restlessness and change of latter-day life, which have begun to extend even to phlegmatic Norway, have made for the monthly term so far as the girl is concerned. Yet experience goes to show that where she has "taken to" her mistress and grown up, as it were, with the house, its economies, and its young people, she will more often cast in her lot with them for life, retiring only at marriage or old age, and in the latter event on a small pension from her grateful employers. The affection evinced by

servants for their patrons is often pathetic, touching, and in a high degree edifying, and never is the line of demarcation as between respect and undue familiarity overstepped, even during intervals of apparent equality. The Herr Grosserer invites his servants to a seat at his family table on Christmas Eve as a matter of course and custom, and "skaals" them to their heart's content and delight; and after dinner (the occasion being exclusively a family one) they enter his *salon*, still in the position of honoured guests. Here they and all the members of the family are presented with their Christmas gifts for that year, and then hand in hand with their master and mistress and the young people of the house, they proceed with full-throated song to dance around and about the resplendent Christmas tree. A similar invitation is extended to them for the New Year's Eve dinner, when at the stroke of twelve they, one and all—young or old, decrepit or sound—mount upon chairs and, as the clock chimes, literally jump down and *into* the New Year.

Butlers and footmen are not in evidence in Norway, and men are only employed in private houses as yard-men and coachmen. Yet even here cases of a thirty or forty years' service in one house are not infrequent, and I know per-

sonally of one old Jehu who, his master having set him up in a small way of business after thirty-five years' faithful service, earnestly begged that he might be allowed to return to his seat on the box.

I have, in the foregoing, stated the typical case of a girl who enters into town service direct from the potato-patches of her native valley. She is not seldom a source of considerable worry and vexation to the *husmor*, or housewife, who, after all the trouble and care of getting her into trim, is obliged to commence *de novo*, because the girl for reasons seldom alleged sees fit to leave her situation. Therefore it is not surprising that the *husmor* prefers, when she can afford it, to pay a little more for the finished article from the many housekeeping schools with which the country abounds. Generally speaking the advantages offered by these excellent establishments should afford no excuse for any young peasant girl being ignorant of the requirements of an ordinary town house—provided always that her parents are disposed to pay the immaterial fee necessary for her tuition. The schools are frequently patronized by ladies, who pay from 60 kroner to 70 kroner a month for a daily attendance of three hours, when they are taught washing, ironing, jam-making, and all the requisite

branches of cooking; and if they are not fully content with the leisured methods of a mere school, they will (and especially just before entering into the married estate) offer their free services, for learning purposes, in the bustling kitchen of some first-class hotel.

The Norwegian servant girl of the town has indeed little to complain of, apart from her onerous duties—which, after all, are common in kind to every one in a poor and struggling country. She is well fed and housed, lives and breathes in one of the most healthy and picturesque lands on earth (if she only knew it), has plenty of leisure time to amuse herself, and is in less danger of getting into trouble in the town (where she is required to be in at ten o'clock, and where her every movement is exposed to the fierce light of day) than in the easier life of her home environments. Her native press moreever takes her under its special protection in the matter of the foreigner and his traffic in "White Slaves," and a tireless committee of altruistic young ladies, her countrywomen, sees to it that she need never leave her home for service in the towns without being duly met at stations and housed until such times as she may find a suitable place. Less resourceful, less lithe of movement, and less spick-and-span than the British

servant, she has nevertheless priceless qualities of her own that make for her being much sought after, even in the land of the servant aforesaid. Her unfailing good temper is notorious among Norway-loving Britishers, who, at hotels, posting-stations, and tourists' huts always greet her smiling face with responsive grins as she good-humouredly attends to their ridiculous requirements at the most impossible times; or on the numerous little fjordal steamers, in storm or calm, omnipresent, methodical, and full of sympathy for the sick or the "just going to be's," "all so different," as the said Britishers will vainly endeavour to explain to her, "from the native male creature of *our* coasting steamers, who in shirt-sleeves, perspiring and belated, whacks us down a plate of cold roast beef and pickles, and a cup of stewed tea, C.O.D., and, then forgetting the salt or the mustard, rushes off unto all eternity." The Norwegian servant girl is indeed an institution to be profoundly grateful for. But you mustn't hurry her.

CHAPTER IX

HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS

I DO not commend the average Norwegian hotel, particularly the commercial hotel of the smaller towns, to the insomniac whose "sleeve of care" has been extensively ravelled, and if there be any of my touring fellow-countrymen who have sought their repose betimes with a view to catching an early fjordal boat, and have been entertained by a trio of Norwegian ship captains on the other side of the wooden partition drawing corks and talking "freights" the livelong night through, they will doubtless see fit to endorse my contention. We have most of us, at some time or another, been edified by the sad if hypothetical case of the Frenchman and the Italian who were locked into an apartment for forty-eight hours at a stretch for the set purpose of testing their powers of conversational endurance, with the result that at the end of that period the defunct body of the unfortunate, and less garrulous, Italian was found extended on the floor, and the exhausted but triumphant Frenchman

whispering into his ear. Now, if a Norwegian ship captain had been included in the trial, with say "freights" thrown in as a subjective handicap for the Southerners, I have no hesitation in affirming that the rate of mortality would have been increased by one, and that the Norseman would certainly not have contributed to it.

The *handelsreisende*, or commercial traveller, is often, if not oftener, a more disturbing element in the small hotel than the sleepless plougher of the seas. He comes and goes at all hours of the day and night, and as he is always accompanied by a stock of samples that would set up an average tradesman in a fair way of business, the racket imposed by the cartage of the huge boxes up and down the stairs in the still watches of the night are certainly not conducive to slumber. Noisily insistent, and quite oblivious of the claims of others to some consideration, he is a continual source of expectant misery to the light-sleeping guests of these timber-built, and resonant, hostelries. It was not the crowing of the cock that disturbed the nocturnal repose of the irritable philosopher of Ecclefechan so much as the waiting for it to crow. But the *handelsreisende* is a considerable asset, if not the chief asset, in the economy of the hotel, and if he chose to hurl his boots or goloshes out on the landing at the dream-

ful hour of 2 a.m., or snore (which he seldom fails to do) throughout the night, why, it must be put up with, that is all. You must not, at the peril of being summoned for *aere kraenkelse* (outrage to his honour), thump upon the partition, or send him in a note of a gratuitously reflective kind. In short, you must not do or say anything of a nature calculated to disturb *his* repose. I remember one night, or rather early morning—it was 1.30 a.m. to be precise—being haled from dreams of bliss (all aback and visibly trembling) by an incursion of the kind alluded to. The din was terrific; doors were being slammed, heavy boxes dumped upon the landing, the sounds of scurrying feet were all over the house, and dominating the whole, like the oboe in the orchestra, was a stentorian voice demanding the production of a hot meal for almost immediate consumption. "But," stipulated the voice, in a tone of uncompromising truculence as I got out of bed and proceeded to dress, all idea of further sleep being out of the question, "tell me, first, is this thing I have heard about your establishment true? because if it is, I prefer to bestow my patronage on some other house in the town. Tell me, *is this a noisy hotel?*"

It was in a sense a red-letter day to me, that day in the out-of-the-way but hospitable little

hotel, inured as I am to the alarums and excursions, and surprises of a nomadic life. The departure of the assertive gentleman of the road that afternoon, with the usual tempestuous accompaniments, having given place to an interval of comparative quietude, I had thrown myself on my bed with the object of resuming my interrupted sleep. But I was brought to my legs again almost immediately by an animated discussion which had supervened in the room next to mine, a discussion which, from the fragments that remained to me, I seemed to have little difficulty in placing. Propellers, keels, ballast, leeway, tophamper, and, strange to say, even dogs and their keep (which struck me as being odd) came hurtling through the partition in the old, old way, and in ever-increasing profusion. "*Mes amis les Capitaines Norvégiens se disputent*," I muttered with a sigh, as I put on my hat and coat to go out for the day. I was about to descend the stairs, with that miserable assumption of placidity under all circumstances which is expected of you in Norway, when the door of the adjoining room opened and two gentlemen came forth. Of course I was right. They *were* captains; but not of the ordinary vessels of commerce, nor yet of war. They were MM. Fridtjiof Nansen and Raold Amundsen,

and they had been merely discussing some point of Arctic and mutual interest. In a rugged country such as Norway, with its small population and prescribed thoroughfares, it is really not surprising the number of celebrities you may rub shoulders with in the course of a season. I have, much to our mutual surprise, tumbled upon Royalty, Itself, quietly consuming Its *Smörrebröd* and lager in a place where you might under ordinary circumstances have expected to put up a capercailzie. At another time I found myself, to my unbounded astonishment, seated at dinner with a Radical Prime Minister, and asking him to pass me the salt, please, without the least sense of trepidation. And what a fund of general knowledge was this man possessed of! It might—but for one thing—have been absolutely encyclopædic. I learned more things of him, in a fluent English, and a two hours' conversation, than I thought it possible for any human being to acquire—and live. In the days of our grandfathers he would undoubtedly have been described as a "man of parts," and deservedly so. But there was one—only one—thing which his Excellency did *not* know: though I am really not so certain that it was sufficiently material to subvert nations. And this one thing which he did not know—the "odd trick," as it were,

to me—is, and shall ever remain, in the tentative phrase of the late Mr Sterne, another story.

With some apology to the sleepless one for the digression, I would in all earnestness say to him, do not go to the hotel of the *handelsreisende* if you are at all self-conscious of nights. You will not miss anything by the abstention—there are as good hotels in Norway as ever you failed to visit—and I am certain he will not miss *you*. He is really of the best of good fellows when you get on easy terms with him, and is quite a popular institution in the country, but you must be possessed of a similar robustuous constitution, with its sleeping facilities, if you would patronize his haunts.

So far as I am personally concerned, being as it were to the country born, I have been always more in evidence at the *privat hotel*. The *clientèle* of these homely little institutions is native, as are also the management and staff—which latter are usually female, and related; though there is, of course, no restriction as to the nationality of the guests or the management. The many first-class hotels and sanatoria of Norway are by no means less comfortable, if less expensive, than similar institutions on the continent. Here the insomniac may take up his abode without any nocturnal apprehensions in

respect of our breezy friend the *handelsreisende*; for the lifts take his Brobdingnagian boxes noiselessly up and down through the many floors, thick pile stair-carpets deaden his elephantine tread, his voice is less insistent under the tremendous impressiveness of his surroundings, and his interludal snores at night are securely walled in by an impermeable barrier of masonry. But, as is the case with the majority of these caravansaries, however luxurious, however crowded, the sense of loneliness seems always to be with you, though it is difficult to suggest wherein the anomaly lies. No exception may be taken to the deferent, if automatic, manner in which you are ticketed in the hall, numbered in your bedroom, or pigeon-holed as to your correspondence; nor can you grumble at the ready, if perfunctory, way in which your casual requirements are attended to by the numerous staff of servants. Were you a bad case in a well-ordered private hospital you could ask for no better consideration than is vouchsafed to you here. But the sense of abandonment would nevertheless be with you —which would seem to bring us within some measurable distance of a solution of the mystery. The inclusive charges of the first-class hotel may range from 8 kroner a day, or even less for a prolonged stay, to anything you like according

to your requirements. The *privat hotels* are, of course, much cheaper, and their rates can be put down at less than half that of the more pretentious establishments. Boarding-houses, or *pensionats*, are very numerous in Norway, and, according to our ideas, very cheap. The charge for a bedroom, with board, may commence as low as 70 kroner, and even 60 kroner, for a permanent residence, and, according to the class of the *pensionat*, to 120 kroner, and even more, a month; but the average amount, to meet the necessities of the normal salary of 100 kroner a month, would appear to be 60 kroner and 70 kroner—say 16 shillings a week; a sum which one would imagine only the presiding genius of a Mrs Todgers, or Squeers, could manipulate with any marginal possibilities. But it is done, and done well; and the food, which is always served on spotless cloths, is good and by no means stinted. The *privat hotel* is as often as not presided over entirely by ladies, with a staff of girl-servants and the regulation male porter to meet the trains and boats. If the guest is at all *elskvaerdig*, or amiable, he will be treated as a welcome friend, and he may look forward to his periodic visits to the hotel as to a general home-coming. There is the *table d'hôte*, of course, with its fixed meal hours and fixed topics of con-

versation; but the *Herre* can dine upstairs in his rooms if he has a preference that way. There is nothing in the least to hinder so desirable a consummation, provided that the table may be laid in the orthodox cookery-school way, with all the accompanying paraphernalia thereby entailed. The thing must be done properly or not at all. You may be surprised to find yourself waited upon by the peasant girl, who, some years ago, in her gorgeous national dress, rowed you over at the ferry station in distant Sorgeland. Her father, the *gaardbruger*, or farmer, has paid liberally for her housekeeper schooling in Christiania, and really to look at her in her smart serge skirt, silken blouse, and happy expression of face you will be half inclined to approve of the transformation. She will be no less pleased to see you, and to hear all the news from her native wilds—and especially to receive the letter which her old mother, who has no confidence whatever in the integrity of His Majesty's Postal Department, has committed to your safe keeping. A curious trait, this latter, among the many idiosyncrasies of a primitive people. If you are fairly well known, and your honesty and complaisance have been tried and found not wanting you may discover that your services in the rôle of a beneficent *handelsreisende* are tacitly ex-

pected of you. In the country district wherein you reside your contemplated journeys to town would seem to become common knowledge in the same occult manner peculiar to the Hindus: and then you may look out for commissions.

On the mornings of these departures I have been entrusted with quite a delivery of letters and parcels to relations in town, whom, as well as the senders, I had probably never seen before, and during the voyage down the tortuous and interminable lake the boat has been boarded by old women and children with similar consignments (enwrapped in a protective covering of newspaper), which they have thrust into my hands, and then departed down the gang-plank without further word or sign. Or, driving through a lonely forest, the horse would be thrown on its haunches by the sudden appearance from behind a tree bole of an old *bonde* with a ten-kroner bill, and a request that a long-outstanding account at the china and glass shop in "Strand gade" might be liquidated therewith, and a receipt obtained. Sometimes these commissions would be handed to me with a hint as to the desirability of my hunting up the recipients on the day previous to my return, in view of possible replies. Occasionally a limp-looking

missive, addressed to me in person, would materialize on the door-mat during the night, like a Mahatma communication, and then I knew I was in for trouble of no mean kind. It might only contain a request that I would be so *snil* as to purchase a bottle of cough mixture or a toothache remedy at the druggist for value duly enclosed, or to call at the hospital and ask the *Herr Doktor* how sister Johanna was getting along after the operation, or the still easier task of stamping and posting an enclosed letter addressed to Minnesota, for which purpose the amount of the postage was therewith enclosed. But these were as of the nature of holiday errands in comparison with some others with which I have been favoured; such, for instance, as the matching and purchase of some article of feminine attire, or the procurement of a squeaking doll with practicable eyes—which I hated to do, on account of the suppressed mirth which these inquiries always induced—or puppies of nondescript origin (often unweaned, and without any eyes to speak of), or kittens in baskets, or an extremely refractory young pig in a bag. But these things had to be done. In such a country, and among such people, it would have been hard indeed to have refused your good offices in these respects, especially when it is borne in mind that they would have done as

much for you, and more, as a mere matter of course, had the occasions ever arisen.

In winter time it is good to sit at your dining table in the *privat hotel* and enjoy your cigar and your glass of wine after the Siberian experiences of your long sleigh drive, or in summer after the tedious and dusty journey along the arid high roads. Your hostess will drop in to pay her respects, and, incidentally, to see that the stove (if it be winter) is in good going order, and that Karen, the girl, has not been remiss in the matter of clean towels and sheets. Karen will bring you in pen and ink and a very formidable-looking *protocol*, or register, which she will open and invite you to write in. This is one of the many little bureaucratic innovations which Norway loves to adopt from time to time from her German cousin. In separate headed columns you write your name, land of birth, profession, last stopping-place, intended destination, and the dates of your arrival and prospective departure. So far as the Britisher is concerned, the filling in of these particulars is more or less a matter of form, though he would benefit materially were he during his solitary wanderings up country to get lost among the fjelds, or in other ways disappear unduly from human ken, and some clue to his latest movements be required. Sometimes the

intended purposes of these registers are abused most shamefully by tourists of the genus 'Arry, who fill in the appointed spaces with apocryphal names, countries, professions, and dates, and depart before the banality is detected. This, it is to be hoped, they would not have done had they known that a kindly host or hostess would be very probably held responsible for the outrage. There are others who blunder from sheer ignorance of the language and the intention of the register, and are therefore to be excused, in a measure, when they inform the Norwegian Government that they require their coffee and rusks at 8 a.m., and request that it will be good enough not to forget their hot water.

The mention of wine, by the way, reminds me that you will not be able to obtain either wine or spirits in the interval between Saturday afternoon and Monday morning, or on certain public holidays; and it is very often doubtful whether you may get either these, or beer, at any time, owing to the restrictions of the licensing authorities. Along the tourist routes of the interior, cut off as the hotels and sanatoria are from the town *samlag*, or off-licence spirit stores, the lack of a wine, spirit, and beer licence is a constant cause of grumbling by natives and foreigners alike, and their complaints have been hitherto

without the least appreciable effect on the peasant communes responsible for the dearth. I once saw a portly Dane (you seldom see a thin one) who had ordered, and been supplied with a substantial dinner for himself and his numerous family at a public restaurant, rise and walk out of the establishment when he was offered the choice of water or milk instead of the beer which he had ordered. He found it quite impossible, he informed the astonished waiter, as he and his wife and progeny filed out through the doorway, to eat any dinner without the beer to which he had been always accustomed. The closure will, however, make very little difference to you if you are an old hand, and must look upon the wine when it is red; for, like some of the tourists above-mentioned, you have probably brought your requirements with you, or sent Karen out post haste to the *samlag* or the apothecary's shop before closing time, for a week-end supply. The system, as you will observe, makes for wholesale dealing, if not wholesale thinking; for it is a standing subject for debate with the budding young Ciceros of the *studenterforenings*.

The inexpensive, if well-managed and up-to-date "Mission" hotels of Norway are much patronized by our countrymen, either when they arrive as tourists or as members of the many

international conferences held in Christiania. The management and staff are all women, and the vexed question of tips is disposed of by the addition of a small percentage to the bill for the benefit of the servants. Notwithstanding the fact that these places are run on fixed tariffs that would make our hotel magnates gasp, they are found to be paying enterprises, and the profits over and above the modest 5 per cent. allowed to the proprietors form a substantial contribution to objects which their name indicates.

In Christiania there are a few restaurants of the type which we are, for purposes of comparison, in the habit of calling Italian restaurants, and there it is possible to obtain all the ready-made or quickly-prepared dishes usually procurable in those places. But in the majority of the towns throughout Norway their place is taken by the *konditori*, which chiefly runs to cakes and *smörrebröd*, with coffee, tea, chocolate and mineral waters as beverages. It has been probably found that, apart from the expense entailed by promiscuous hot lunches at a restaurant, there was really no need for these institutions in a small community where the merchant, or clerk, or labourer is always within a few minutes' walk of his house, or *pensionat*, or *spise hus* (coffee shop). The homeless traveller making a short

stay in a small town must therefore either attend the hotel *table d'hôtes* at their fixed meal times, or survive, as best he may, on *smörrebröd*, cakes and coffee.

I had occasion, some pages back, to refer to the excellence of the pastry supplied by these *konditorier*. The secret, if secret it be, of the phenomenon, as compared with the output of our cake and sweet-stuff shops of the average and therefore cheaper kind, consists in the mere fact that fresh eggs, fresh butter, fresh cream and the best flour only is used in the *konditori* —which is generally, like its materials and make, first-class. Dripping, margarine, shop eggs, inferior flour, and oil have never been tolerated by a public who are nothing if not discriminating. And they do a roaring business these *konditorier*. The customers have a free choice of selection among the miscellaneous kinds of cakes at a fixed price of 7 *öre* (which is just under a penny) apiece. *Aeble kage* (apple cake), and *Napoleon kage*—an aery, sylph-like structure of flake and cream, not at all suggestive of the portly hero of Austerlitz — are obviously prime favourites, though the *romme kage*, a species of sponge-cake flavoured with rum, is a good second. There is, or was in my childhood's days, a *konditori* in Trondhjem—Eriksens, I think, was the name—

where, in addition to the ordinary cake of commerce, you were confronted with a simmering selection of the most delicious fish and oyster patties you shall ever imagine. I do not remember having met with them in other parts of the country, but I am yet living in hopes that their advent in their little iron hot-plates upon the *konditori* counters of all Norway, and possibly London, may be hailed with acclamation during my lifetime. Mineral waters and *brus* (aerated water with fruit essences) are very popular in Norway, and their flat-bottomed, glass-stoppered bottles at the absurdly low price of a penny farthing a bottle are sold in all the *landhandlerier*, or village stores. The fruit essences most in favour for *brus* are banana, pineapple, raspberry, and, of course, lemon. In the towns and on the passenger steamers mineral waters, *brus*, and beers are always kept in ice-safes during summer, and the temperature of the *landhandler's* deep, cool cellar is not to be despised when the thermometer dwells at eighty-five degrees in the shade. It may seem almost superfluous to mention precautions of so obvious a nature, but when I call to mind the general laxness of our own caterers in these respects, the anomaly of a poor people, such as the Norwegians, being so well provided for during heat spells that render a

drink impossible on the sunny side of a London street, is too striking to be passed over unnoted. Non-alcoholic ales and stouts have been lately entering largely into the household economy of Norway, and as there are no licensing restrictions in regard to their sale, they may be had at all hotels, *konditorier*, or coffee-houses.

It is amusing and instructive to sit in a *konditori* between the hours of twelve and two in the afternoon, and note the customers as they enter, get their requirements, and depart. They are of all classes and conditions, from the formal Herr Statsraad, dropping in on behalf of the Frue Statsraadinde, who, with the servants, is over busy at home, to order a supply of assorted pastry for that evening's informal little *selskab*, down to the tiny, dirty *gade gut* who approaches the counter, as to a dock, for his *7 öre æble kage* (with perhaps some broken biscuit thrown in by the kind-hearted manageress), and departs as though dismissed with a caution. It is exceeding strange to see a white-haired old Major-General—or General-Major, as he is called in Norway—come into a place so juvenile and unmilitary, and indulge in food of so ephemeral a kind; but he does so nevertheless, helping himself at the counter to a couple of *Napoleon kager* (a concession, possibly, to his militant pro-

fession), and retiring to one of the many marble-topped tables to read his "Aftenposten," and await his bottle of *brus*. There are piles of plates and heaps of forks for the personal needs of the customer ; and to obviate the touching of the cakes dainty little silver servers, like fish-slices, are ready to hand. You may wait a long while (especially in winter) before you will see a male customer proffer payment from loose change borne in his trousers pockets—thereby infallibly revealing the presence of the Britisher —for they all carry purses with them, into the separate compartments of which they place their nickels, coppers, and kroner bills with the most infinite circumspection: all with the possible exception of the *gade gut* referred to, who usually holds his coin in his hand, or his mouth, for the inappreciable interval it remains to him. Young ladies, as might be expected, form the bulk of the coming and departing stream of customers. They enter in twos, and threes, and fours, and do not disturb the equanimity of the old General-Major in the least when they rather noisily discuss the very latest engagement, over their cream-puffs and chocolate, at a neighbouring table.

Enter, haply, an old *bonde* from Sœtersdalen, in a queer-looking suit of leather combinations,

and a child's hat *in situ* on his grizzled locks. Unemotionally he gazes around him at the frivolous surroundings, and at the butterfly groups of young ladies discussing trivialities and consuming what, to his uncultured mind, is the veriest pap. He approaches the counter with the grim dignity of a red-skin chief, and asks the young lady behind it for a bottle of cholera mixture "for Ingerid, his wife." The irrelevancy of the inquiry, which seems to have been anticipated by the groups at the tables—for who ever heard of an elderly *bonde* laying out money on town cakes?—is conducive to merriment, in which the old General-Major behind his "Aftenposten" is constrained to join. But he of Sœtersdalen turns not a hair of his grizzled locks, as he slowly wheels and passes out—to find the chemist's shop around the corner, whose resemblance to the *konditori*, with its coloured jars, had led him into the pitfall. The *bonde*, and his misadventures in the towns, are a standing cause of the alleged wit that is in the metropolitan papers, and truth to say not without some occasion.

These *konditorier* are oftentimes constructed, decorated, and furnished throughout in the very highest artistic taste. It would almost seem as though the designer had been one of those rare

boy grown-ups whose labour of love had been, in a way of speaking, cake-inspired, and who, of his latent tuck-shop memories, had been unable to disassociate the demands of the sweetmeat from the more formal claims of architecture and mural decoration. I know a *konditori* in Christianssand, nearly opposite to the hotel which is called "Ernst's," that will bear out my contention, and into which I have occasionally dropped, less with a view to refreshments than to solace the eye and the mind in a scheme of structural and decorative harmony that may not be excelled. The outward appearance of the shop, if you omit the quaintly panelled doors with their plate glass, is not particularly edifying, nor is it improved by the bakery adjoining. It is only when you have passed the double-doored entry that you find yourself in an apartment which, less noticeable perhaps at a first glance, you must admit, after due inspection, to be designed and equipped to perfection. The prevailing colour is a dead white, chosen apparently to harmonize with the white marble counter, the little square-topped tables, likewise of marble, and the floor, which is tiled in black and white. There is no upholstery in the place, and the display of pastry on the counter is hidden from the general eye by a marble curb in front. Yet there is no sense of

crudeness in your surroundings; for the simple severity of the design seems to be softened and neutralized, as it were, by its inevitable and exquisite proportion. Curved lines have been dispensed with to the exclusive employment of the rectangule—the key to the inspiration—which in wall, counter, table, tile, and to the minutest panel, occur and recur, relate and inter-relate in a harmony of grace that is quite symphonic. And this harmony is extended to, and assimilates with everything fixed or movable in the place. The perfectly proportioned and disposed shelves and fitments at the back of the counter have their perfectly proportioned and disposed jars of sweet-ware upon them; and even the fragile chairs are so intimately connected with their tables, the chocolate-coloured busts of their Majestys of Norway on their marble pedestals, and the very cupids and flowers on the panelled and glazed ceilings, that you will almost infer that they had been specially designed for the room, or the room for them. It is impossible for the most captious to pick out a line, or space, that might have been otherwise ordered to improve the general scheme. It is perfection.

CHAPTER X

LES NORVÉGIENS S'AMUSENT

MUSIC, literature, the drama, and the many seasonable sports by flood and field, form the sum of the Norwegian *bymand's* relaxations. The *bonde* is not with him here to any great extent, as he is seldom, indeed, with him anywhere, except in rare moments of national crises. His musical inclinations are practically confined to the Hardanger *féle*, or violin of the country, and the *langeleik*, an instrument of the dulcimer kind, and as primitive as the virginal, if not as uninspiring. I have only once had the privilege of hearing the *langeleik* played on, and I cannot truthfully say that I was particularly edified. The Hardanger *féle* is a rather ornate violin, having for resonant and sympathetic effects a second set of four steel strings under the usual e, a, d, and g, of what is called the German violin, and possessing a more level bridge, for "droning" facilities. It is charming to listen to for about the space of twenty minutes on occasions, and amid surroundings that are dis-

tinctly of the fjeld and fjord; after which it is apt, of its iterative limits, to pall upon the *bymand* fresh from the concert rooms of Christiania. I have often heard the *féle* played on by very proficient peasant performers, or *spillemænd*, and have seldom seen them double-stop, move from the first position, or resort to harmonics, or octaves. The music is entirely memorative, and, unless transmitted, is lost at the death of the composer. The playing is decidedly trick-playing, in that it seeks above all things to convey accurately the various sounds of awakening nature in the Norwegian *dals*. Some of these pieces are wonderful in their imitativeness, and when the empirical nature of the so-called science, and the limits of a first position are considered, the performance is a marvel of tonal accuracy. Whatever the limitations of a *spillemand* may be he seldom or never plays out of tune, nor, indeed, out of time, if the heavy tramping of his foot, and sometimes both feet, indicate a defined beat. The minor keys, as might be imagined, are almost invariably resorted to, and unadorned melody seldom figures in the repertoire of these bucolic composers. Melody pure and simple appeals far less to their primitive imagination than the lively dance measure in a minor key. I once had the mortification of

playing, without request, the first portion of the andante movement from Mendelssohn's violin concerto, on a Hardanger *féle*, to a presumed appreciative company of Bratsberg *bönder*: a sorry, poor performance, possibly—though not of malice prepense. The general opinion, as voiced by an old lady, who had been knocking over fire-irons and scouring a coffee-kettle during the interval, was: "ja-ja-ja! the *féle* is the greatest of all instruments; but, God He knows, one must first learn how to play upon it properly." A Corellian giga, however, met with a much better reception; for of its "damnable iteration" it might have been composed by one of their own *spillemænd*. Peasant Norway has produced veritable prodigies in *féle* composition and playing—the *Möllar gutten* of Telemarken, in particular—and *féle*-playing contests for prizes are as popular in the western districts as are the brass-band mêlées in the North of England. The *bonde* is naturally very proud of his *féle* and the prowess of his children in respect of it, and he can only attribute the want of appreciation of the towns of his country and the continent to the effete taste that prevails in those super-cultured communities. And he is probably right—from the *bonde* point of view; for the appreciation, or depreciation, of music is, after all, a matter of

the listener's responsive, or irresponsive personal temperament, and the music of the *féle*, the *langeleik*, and the bagpipes will always meet with enthusiastic reception wherever it may happen upon its human affinities. These Hardanger *féles*, which are as a rule elaborately inlaid with mother-of-pearl and other marquetry, are largely turned out by the peasant brothers Sandeland, of Brunkeberg, in Telemarken.

The *bymand*, on the other hand, is also intensely national in his musical tastes, if in another direction; and the cultured works of his own countrymen appear to an almost monotonous extent in his programmes, often to the complete exclusion of the foreigner. Even among people of some musical culture I have met with those who had never heard of Sullivan or Elgar in any connexion, and Balfe, Wallace, Purcell, and Gibbons were to them as though they had never been. The Norwegians, generally speaking, are not musical in the sense that the average German or Italian is musical, Indeed, a well-known German authority has, to their considerable amusement, dubbed them unmusical. Without going quite as far as the learned professor in question, I would premise that the attitude of the Norwegian public towards music is somewhat analogous to our own towards football and cricket.

They are less emulative than appreciative. You will rarely enter a hotel, or a steamer, anywhere on the coasts without finding a piano in the *salon* for public use; yet during years of travel I can conscientiously affirm that I have never seen a Norwegian gentleman sit down to the instrument as an executant. But when the *brigademusikken* plays, or the *mandsangforening* sings in a public place, you will find no more appreciative crowd than that which hangs breathlessly on their most attenuative pianissimo. Of the nature, or *genre*, of the music itself books have been written, and it would be an act of supererogation on my part to look in where the master has trod. Suffice it to say that you may never listen to it on foreign seas, or soils, without being transferred in the spirit to the great, rugged mystery-land that evoked it. Grieg, Nordraak, Kjerulf, Lasson, Bull, Sinding, Svendsen, Winterhjelm, and many another, are they not to be found in the music-stands of most of our British homes?

The *bonde* takes very little stock in literature or the drama. The former, as represented by the poetry and prose of his own sturdy sons, are seldom pleasant reading to him, so far as he and his home life are concerned; and the latter, when he ever does visit a theatre, frankly speaking,

gives him the blues. He is, of course, exceedingly proud, in his self-contained, grim way, of the achievements of this irrepressible son, and more especially when, as a diversion, he runs *amuk* among the *byfolk*; but the sentiment is rather a negative one, and he thinks he would be far better employed at home splitting wood. For this reason he has, as a member of the national *Storthing*, always been slow to vote stipends to these youngsters for their studies abroad, or even for the bare necessaries of life —thereby often driving them into the arms of Danish broachers, and making their last published opinions on their home life and fiscal methods infinitely worse than their first. And what a galaxy of talent and genius they go to make up—these young men terribly in earnest! Many of them (including not a few patricians of the towns) have grown old and passed away, and left their names as household words in all Scandinavia, if not all literature. Aasmund Vinje, the Norwegian Burns; Ibsen and Björnson, whom we all know; Jonas Lie, novellist of the hearth and home, and apostle of hope; Wergeland, the people's poet, and ever of the people's heart; Welhaven, lyrist, eclectic, solitary, and retired, yet no less profound as an exponent of Norwegian nature; and last, if not least,

Alexander L. Kielland, novellist, dramatist, and writer of *belles-lettres*, the Daudet of the North, and the first of them all to invest a not too subtile idiom with that sparkle, wit, satirical humour, and felicity of phrase usually associated with the best French essayists. Great men these, one and all; but they have been succeeded by others no less capable of carrying on the torch, and the names of Caspari, Garborg, Hamsun, and the coming young poet Olaf Bull, together with those of the brothers Vilhelm and Thomas P. Krag, Jacob Bull, Heiberg, Carl Naerup, Clara Tschudi, Alvilde Prydz, Hulda Garborg, and the quite juvenile Sigrid Undset, not to mention many another scarcely less brilliant, according to his, or her, particular lights, augur well for Norway's literary future. But here again it behoves me to be most chary about entering into domains where the more critically competent angels, MM. Archer, Gosse, Brandes, and Boyesen do not fear to tread.

In the domain of sport, in that word's best sense, and as applied to fishing and shooting, the *bonde* is again at odds with the *bymand*. The term "sport" is utterly incomprehensible to him, or only considered from the point of view of quantity, or avoirdupois, and quite regardless of exterminatory results. Indeed, it would almost

seem to be of his nature that he cannot have a good thing without hounding it to death. Let a fishing ground, rich in prawn and shrimp, be discovered, and it will be dredged out of existence in no time, and to the irreparable damage of local fishing and fisherman alike; certainly this must be laid more particularly at the door of his cousin the *sjö-bonde* (sea peasant); but he is not at all backward himself in similar devastations, as evidenced by the wholesale autumnal netting of his lakes, the spearing of fish in their tributaries when they run up to spawn, the general use of the otter; and he knows I have caught him more than once, or twice, in the very act of dynamiting the fish in their favourite pools. He has adopted this last and detestable practice from the workmen of the many mining and other camps as a swift and convenient method for getting all the fish he wants without undue physical exertion. As a result, big-trout fishing, except in the specially guarded lakes of the sanatoria and hotels, distant mountain tarns, or on the plateaux of Finmark, is practically of the past. Of small trout, of course, there will always be any quantity available; but they will, under present circumstances, never be other than small trout—or "six-inchers," as they are jocularly termed. Game, despite a large amount of

illegal snaring and deforestation, and thanks to the comparative dearth of *bonde*-trained dogs, is still sufficiently abundant, and the grouse of the fjelds contribute largely to the incomes of *bonde* communities. But there is ample room for betterment were the laws regulating these matters strictly enforced. Let it not be imagined for a moment that the Government has not been alive to the heinousness of some of the proceedings above mentioned. In few other countries have the interests of fish and game been so well provided for as in Norway—on paper. The pity of it is that it has been found next to impossible to maintain the laws governing them. The *lensmand*, or rural constable responsible for their enforcement, is usually a *bonde*, living as a *bonde*, and related by his business vocations or consanguinity to his fellow-*bönder*—who, after all, own the lakes and forests in question—and he is therefore naturally desirous of maintaining peaceful relations with all and sundry. One cannot contemplate this state of things without some feelings of sympathy for the many societies of Norwegian sportsmen, and others, who have been, and are, striving so hard to conserve the fish and game of what should be one of the best sporting fields in Europe. In the chivalrous attribute of "playing

the game" the Norwegian gentleman ranks second to none. He is a sportsman to his finger tips; and therefore does he merit the support of all true sportsmen in his endeavour to stem this destructive crusade, with its motto of—help yourself, when, how, and where you can. The big-game shooting of Norway, including moose, red deer, and reindeer, is mostly confined to the rich of other countries, and is, owing to the lack of poaching facilities in this respect, fairly well protected. The same refers to salmon-fishing, though recent communal decrees prolonging the period of coastal netting from two *dögn* (forty-eight hours) to three *dögn* (seventy-two hours) a week is not unnaturally viewed by Englishmen (who have leased most of the salmon rivers) as the beginning of the end of even that staple sport. On the other hand, the Norwegian burgher has the advantage in respect of general shooting in a number of privileges not accorded to the foreigner, who is handicapped by the annual charge of 100 kroner for a gun licence, the necessary permission to shoot over another man's property, and the law forbidding him to import his own dogs. None of these restrictions, however, will effect the ordinary tourist to any great extent, as his stay in the country practically coincides with

the close season. Bears, once so numerous all over the country, are, with the wolves, little to be seen, though were a close time ever agreed to respecting them, which is not at all likely, they would doubtless soon over-run the country again. However, though the day of the bear is practically over, he is uncomfortably in evidence at times over a widely extended area of the country, and particularly in the neighbourhood of the Bandak and Nordsjö lakes in Telemarken, and the Drangedal Mountains to the south. They are marked down in their winter lairs by the *bonde*, an observation ring is drawn around them, and the "ring" is advertised, and leased, to the Herr Grosserer, or his foreign cousins, for the ensuing kill. The glutton is still far too common, and among the mountain pastures in the south-west his depredations are more terrible than that of any other animal of prey; but it is quite an event to get within shooting distance of him. The same applies in a lesser degree to the *gaupe*, or lynx, who would almost seem to possess the crow's prescience in regard to unarmed men; for I once followed one at less than five hundred yards' distance through a forest path for over a mile, during which he trotted along in the most leisurely manner

possible, stopping every now and again to squat down and watch my movements, his tufted ears erect, and his large staring eyes fixed curiously upon me, like the great wild cat he undoubtedly is.

On the ski question the *bonde* certainly scores over his town cousin, for he it was who not only was the first to adopt them, and fit them, in a modified form (the circular *tryger*), to the hoofs of his horse, but he taught the *bymand*, if not the world (as we see it in the Swiss chaussées), their possibilities. The wonder is that they have not been adopted long ago in other alpine countries. As a child the delights of ski-running are among my very earliest memories. In those days, however, a *bonde* would never have dreamt of fastening the ski to his feet, as is now the general fashion; for he had got the notion into his head that it would result in a broken leg, or a twisted knee or ankle-joint, should he fall in one of his ferocious mountain descents; and when it is remembered that he showed as little hesitation then, as now, in negotiating a *hop*, or an almost vertical *rend*, it testifies greatly to his undoubted intrepidity. It had its disadvantages, this loose ski system, in many ways, as when, for instance, in the event of a fall high up on a steep wooded



A SKILÖBER (SKI-RUNNER) NEGOTIATING A "HOP"

slope, a runaway pair of ski came flying down at express speed among unsuspecting wayfarers below; or when, on days of varying temperature, the *fotos*, or foot-loops—often of wicker—were constantly getting caked up with frozen snow. In those days the prize *ski-rends* of the *bonde*, with their *hops*, were very much as they are now; but the manner of descent, and the accoutrements of the ski-runner, were different. The double ski *stav* (stave), an innovation of the towns, was then unknown, and a single one was considered to be quite sufficient for brake purposes. The legs were also held very widely apart, in order to maintain what was then erroneously considered to be a proper equilibrium. And thus, in a crouching position, with his red stocking-cap (now, alas! of the past) drawn down over his ears, the young *bonde* would glide over the lip of a precipitous hill, to *sving* triumphantly past the applauding spectators on the plateau below: or disappear under the *hop* in clouds of snow, out of which a pair of runaway *ski*, like lightning, darted most threateningly. But apart from these prize *hop rends*, the practised *bonde* ski-runner very rarely falls. Born and bred, as it were, on ski, the latter are to him what the horse is to the nomad, and I have never seen a *gaucho*, or

a Pampas Indian, fall otherwhere than on his feet.

When the Telemarken lads eventually came to town, and showed the astonished *bymand* what might be accomplished on a pair of ski, the latter fell to thinking furiously, with the results that the *bymand* is now not only as good as, if not better than, his *bonde* master, so far as the ski is concerned, but Norwegian ski-resorts, with their ski-running contests, are (*vide* tourist bureaux itineraries) to be found all over the country. But if you wish to see the *bonde* in his native ski element, and desire to study the uses of the ski in the everyday home life of himself and his womenkind, then you must take the steamer from Skien, in Telemarken, to Kirkebö —a half-day's trip, if ice admits—and sleigh up the steeps of Brunkeberg until, in the course of a couple of hours, you reach the little mountain hamlet of Morgedal. Here you will perhaps notice that the use of the ski is mostly confined to the younger people of both sexes. In *bonde* Norway grey hairs spell old age, if not senility, and an elderly *bonde* would look upon it as the height of incontinence to take up a sport which he has long since laid aside with the activities of his youth. In the skating field he is still *facile princeps*, though other nations, and especially

Russia, have lately begun to draw unpleasantly close to his heels.

Strenuous efforts are being made in Norway to divert the stream of foreign ski-lovers, and especially Britishers, from Switzerland to Norwegian winter resorts. It is advanced that there are practically two ski seasons in Norway: the ordinary winter season of the low-land resorts, and the late spring and summer season of the fjeld hospices, such as Finse, on the mountain-railway connecting Bergen with Christiania, where ski-running may be enjoyed as late as July. This advantage is certainly being recognized by our ski-runners, who singly, or in personally conducted batches, have been increasingly in evidence at these resorts during the last few seasons. But if this venture is to be pursued on the same scale as in Switzerland, then Swiss methods must also be adopted. The present hotel accommodation, ample just now, would have to be very much extended; public moneys must be forthcoming for the acquisition and upkeep of the necessary ski-running, bob-sleighing, and skating terrenes; and the said terrenes must be set apart for the exclusive use of the visitor, native or foreign. That the first and even the second provision may be possible of attainment there ought to be little

doubt; but that the *bonde*, with his peculiar ideas of *meum* and *tuum*, and his sense of absolute social equality, will assent to the third *sine qua non*, I have my own very decided opinion. And it must be remembered that the *bonde*, as voter and legislator in these matters, is at present a power in the land.

In addition to the Eidsvold, Larvik, and Modum mineral baths, there are no less than seven sea-bathing sanatoria, twenty-four sanatoria inland, and a number of first-class hotels and mountain hospices at the disposal of the Herr Godseier, the Herr Grosserer, the lesser fry, and the numerous foreign invaders of their country. It would be invidious to mention any particular one of these where all is arranged with an almost clockwork perfection of detail for the comfort of the guests. Those on the coasts are chiefly devoted to the curative processes of balneology, a branch of medical therapeutics which has lately made great strides in Norway. Here the different forms of treatment are without end, including the famous Medusa or jelly-fish bath, mud baths, hot-air peat massage, pine-needle baths, carbonic acid sea-baths, and others too numerous to tabulate. Most of these sanatoria have their resident physician, with hydropathic treatment for

every ailment under the sun, while the remaining hotels and hospices have no better inducements to offer than an excellent table and the pure airs of the mountain and forest.[1]

[1] The word "Sanatorium," as used by Norwegians, does not necessarily imply a resort for consumptives, or other invalids.

CHAPTER XI

IN THE TOWNS

It has been humorously alleged that a complete census of any Norwegian town may be taken when the arrival of a steamer sends its inhabitants hurrying down to the landing-stage to give it greeting. And there is an element of truth in the jape; for these advents, or an occasional alarm of fire at night, are pretty certain to produce an exhaustive turn-out of the population. The inquisitiveness of the Norwegian is proverbial, and his methods for satisfying the craving deer-like, if at times a little fatuous; but it is all so obviously natural and well meant that, after a few years of the infliction, you will not only get used to it, but may actually catch yourself in the act emulating it. In the towns this characteristic is innocuous enough in its measure of well-bred control; but in the country, where all things are eternally equal, it is quite another affair, and I have seen an English demagogue, who, quite unmoved, has faced his howling audiences from a Trafalgar Square plinth, thrown into a state of absolute frenzy

by its persistent inquiry and bovine stare. The Britisher who elects to reside in Norway, and considers (as he very naturally will) that his private affairs are entirely his own, or, at most, a discretionary matter of the State, will be surprised to see his name with his presumed (he will not be requested to state them himself) income and fortune appearing in the local newspapers and the public directories,[1] and all particulars of his investments affixed to the church door of his parish. But this is, of course, a ruling which is tacitly accepted by the public, and he will doubtless get as used to it in time as he will to any other enactment of the authorities. The laws of Norway, so far as he is concerned, are particularly discerning and just, and, should contentions arise, he will not have cause to complain that he, as a foreigner, has been unfairly treated.

The traffic of the inner harbour is one of the standing attractions of which the inquisitorial efforts of the townsman never seem to tire. The well-lit piers, with their adjoining quays, are in a sense public promenades; and there on any evening you may find the bulk of the population of a small town stolidly watching the berthing of

[1] Since these lines written sundry modifications in the laws have been introduced to meet public sentiment in this respect.



FISH MARKET, BERGEN

a home-bound barque, or emotionally speeding some little coffee-pot of a local tug on its four-mile route across the fjord. It is, of course, a harmless form of dissipation at its worst, and failing any other it is difficult to suggest how the intervals of rest might be better employed. There are people who will tell you that without these *adspredelser*, or abstractions, life in the small town would be simply unendurable. But it is only the young people who will tell you this—the young and travelled. The elderly and hardened know better; but they say nothing, for they also have been young, and have travelled, and they have long since lived the sentiment down.

The travelled youths of Norway frankly acknowledge that life in their towns, with the possible exceptions of Christiania, Bergen, and Trondhjem, is too *planmæssig*, *smaalig*, and *snævsyndet*, that is to say, too ordered, petty, and narrow-minded, to meet their conceptions of the life as it should be lived; and they will tell you, with their usual candour, that they often find their existence irksome almost beyond tolerance when they return from a sojourn amid the distractions of a merry continental town. They lay the blame for this deplorable state of things on the complacent heads of their bourgeois elders, who, they opine, have been young themselves in their

day, and therefore ought to know better. "Know better than—what?" I have not unnaturally, if a little maliciously asked; but the query has seldom produced a satisfactory, or even a coherent reply; for the Norwegian bourgeois and his views is orthodoxy itself, and our inveterate old friend Mrs Grundy has her connexions in every town and village in Norway. The poorer cousins of the interior who have never travelled, and who are never likely to do so, unless they emigrate, have also these periodic intervals of *længsel*, or longing, especially if they have been to town and visited the cinemas; but beyond a softly sighed out "*ja-ja, san*" of resignation you will never hear them rail at their lot in life. They have occasionally produced writers of undoubted genius, these country cousins, who, of their drab surroundings and this tendency to *længte*, have been impelled to rebel and furiously attack the cast-iron order of things as they are, but the things as they are being (in the opinion of the Herr Grosserer) the only possible alternative to the unmentionable things that might be, Church and State have gone on their respectable, if exasperating way without any particular damage to speak of.

It would be difficult, indeed, to imagine how any other kind of social system could make

for a greater happiness of the individual in these little communities than at present obtains. In Western Norway, where this sporadic restiveness usually takes literary form, the weather has a good deal to answer for; but you cannot help the weather, and after all it is seldom much worse than that of highland Scotland, or the valleys of South Wales—say that of Neath, for choice. I once lodged, during a wet season, in the dog-infested cottage of an Aberdylais tin-plate-worker, and truly of the two evils I infinitely prefer Norwegian Florö at any season: and Florö, mind you, is even moister than Bergen—where the dogs bark at a man who goes about without an umbrella and macintosh. One must, nevertheless, admit that life in these small towns is, to put it mildly, not particularly hilarious, and if it were not for the fact that their peoples have an almost fatalistic faculty of making the best of things, and are constantly migrating from one town to the other, or emigrating, there might be a good deal in the contentions of the young people aforesaid. It is a soul-depressing obligation, as an instance, to have to raise your hat some scores of times in the course of the day to the same persons, in the same unavoidable main thoroughfare, and accompany the act with as many "Good day agains," "farewell agains,"

and "until our next meeting agains." A week of this sort of thing is all very well in its way, if you are on a short visit. But a lifetime of it! "Granted," you will probably remark, "but why do it?" Why? Because—well, because if you were to fail to do so on insular, or other scruples, you would at once run the risk of being placed in the category of the subversive young writers before mentioned. The custom of the country, which ordains that the new-comer must call first on the residents, and, if a gentleman, first raise his hat on meeting a lady, will afford you no relief whatever. You must know everybody, or, if not, everybody will very particularly want to know the reason why, and, failing any, find you one—or more. And there you have the whole system as a microcosm. Any one of these petty ceremonial amenities foregone is tantamount to an implied dissent from the whole. And the machinery of the whole will not go out of gear for you—or a dozen like you—or even pause for one second on its ponderous and well-oiled centres to express its surprise. Of its terrible powers (which are centrifugal for the occasion) it will incontinently throw you—or a dozen like you—into the outermost darkness of the social pariah, where you will please to remain until you have learned to behave. "Yet, they are all so

democratic," you will further remark, "so almost Utopian, the most free-and-equal of the peoples of the earth!" Quite so; and so they always will be. They are quite satisfied with the things as they are. I have not been complaining. Nobody has been grumbling: only a few youths —who have travelled.

Rome is to young Norway what Paris is assumed to be to the American. So is Florence, or Padua, or Milan, or any other town as long as it is under the blue skies of the gloriously sunny South. But this is during the Romeo and Juliet age, and they give place, with the salad, to Berlin, or even Dresden. Paris comes next, and then London—which is usually associated, among the poorer classes, with the House of Lords and Jack the Ripper. London is so vast, and so very expensive, they say, and the English home-life (especially the institution of the boarding-house, with its eternal teas, and lack of side dishes) is so utterly different from that to which they have been accustomed. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, if Germany, so akin in language, customs, and diet, and with its many Norwegian colonies, should take precedence over other countries as a Norwegian field for further light and learning. Copenhagen is too near the home, and heart, to be considered as a foreign town, and

it is in its way a sort of Norwegian Brighton, without the beach and the faculty of being able to pronounce its "r's." America, as previously pointed out, is considered more in the light of a last resort under certain desperate circumstances, and therefore as a sort of purgatorial half-way-house between Norway and Walhalla. His Majesty the King and his Government are, moreover, by no means partial to these irreparable drainings of the nation's best blood, and the Herr Doktor has very plainly told his country-women that the strenuous life and strident climate of the United States have a dessicative effect on her native freshness. Her hair becomes dry and coarse, he tells her, her cheeks wan and pale, her eyes hollow, and she returns (if she ever returns) with a restlessness of manner and an expression of vague discontent quite foreign among her own people. Thus the Herr Doktor: and do you know I often think there is a good deal to be said for his contention.

And what are these little home towns like? They are certainly very picturesque, whatever else they may be, and you will never find any two of them situated, or looking quite alike. They dot the far-flung coast line of Norway from Fredrikshald to Vadsö, with longer or shorter intervals between them as their special

vocations have called them into being. You usually happen upon them with surprising suddenness, and in places where you would least expect to see a town. Just when you have concluded that your pilot has gotten the steamboat into a *cul de sac*, and is about to try an overland route across a neighbouring skerry, an agglomeration of little wooden structures will appear to the eye as if by magic, perched upon terraces of rock, and looking in their colours of red, yellow, and green, not unlike a collection of newly painted toy houses put out to dry; or at the end of a long day's tramp through a wilderness of lakes and pine-barren bluffs, when you are beginning to fancy you have inadvertently passed your town by, and are seriously thinking of retracing your steps, a church bell tolling a decease, or a wedding, or a funeral, or some other melancholy circumstance will reveal its presence in the gorge under your very feet. And they are all planned more or less alike in so far as the conformation of the surroundings will admit. The market-place, or *torvet*, faces the pier, and contains the *raadhus* (town hall), where the urban council sits; the *spare bank*, where the hard-earned savings are (the Norse idiom is nothing if not virile) *indskudt*, or shot in; the post-office, the telegraph and telephone offices, and the shop of the apothe-

cary. In the main, or High Street, is the one large Stores, which practically clothes, feeds, and furnishes the town, the hotel for the better-class travelling public—usually *handelsreisender*—and the other hotel with the gramophone, and the pocketless billiard-table for the more local clientéle. A row of wharves with their crazy-looking "sea-houses" on stilts extends from either side of the pier, and steam-launches, tugs, and fishing smacks come and go from early morning until late at night. Dominating the whole on a fertile and timbered eminence is the little Lutheran kirke, with its preposterously high steeple towering above the well-kept acre of the dead. Hard by is the *gamle hjem*, or almshouse for the aged poor, the schoolhouse, and the working-men's club, where the bazaars and the public balls are held. The main street becomes a high road opposite the portals of the church, and goes zigzagging off among the lakes and pine-barren bluffs of the interior in a seemingly indeterminate way, until some sudden sense of its duties to the public sends it hurrying back to the coast and the next town, where it becomes a main street again under similar clerical patronage.

The *torvet* has its usual groups of *bönder* who have driven their milk into the *meieriet*, or public

dairy, early that morning, and are garnering the latest outside news before returning to their *gaards*; but they do not assimilate with the perennially lounging knots of sailors and fishermen, waiting for a wind, or tidings of the long-expected shoals of mackerel or herring. With these exceptions and the usual bevy of children at play, or haply a couple of dogs chasing each other around the town fountain, there is scarcely any other living thing to be seen, everyone having his, or her, wage-earning task to perform for that day. The women who are not busy with domestic duties at home are, with few exceptions, hard at work in factories, hotels, business offices, coffee-shops, telegraph, postal, and telephone offices, and the petty shops of the town; and they will not be in evidence until the meal hour, or the evening, or Sunday, sends them out into the streets. When women meet to discuss the outgoings and incomings of another woman, the first question that is usually put is, "What does she do?" and if on indisputable evidence it is found that she does nothing, it will be good for that woman, failing independent means, if she tranfer her condition of *dolce far niente* to another town. The men are equally busy, and are as seldom to be seen in the narrow streets and public square as their sisters in work.

Thus the days, months, and years will pass without any epoch-making event to mark their progress beyond the seldom epidemic, or the still rarer, if more dreaded, fire—which will sweep the little wood-built town out of existence in the space of a night, and prepare the site for a new town built up of red brick. There is work for all in these little communities, and if it is not readily obtainable the authorities will find it for you, and plainly tell you, if you are physically sound, that you must take it or go into the State workhouse. In a poor country, where every individual has to bear his proportionate share of a crushing tax, your neighbour sees to it that he, at least, shall not contribute to any local outdoor relief on your account while you have the strength to handle a spade or break a stone. On a Sunday, in summer, and between the church services, the *torvet*, the pier, the quays, and the adjoining streets are filled with promenading bevys of well-dressed young girls (the women always preponderate), chatting and laughing, and obviously in the rarest of high spirits, and the men stand about at the street corners, or in the middle of the *torvet*, in silent groups, with their hands in their pockets (their normal receptacles during inertia), smoking—everlastingly smoking—and noting the womenfolk with that superior air of

condescension so peculiar to the lower-class Norwegian in his attitude towards the opposite sex. You will be seldom disturbed by the insistent attentions of a drunken man—never by the sight of a drunken woman—and the rags of penury are not affected, even by the poorest of the poor. An air of well-being and content seems to pervade on all sides, and that it is not assumed for the occasion is evidenced by the flushed cheeks and bright eyes of the women, and the expression of stolid satisfaction that characterizes the features and movements of the men. The evening is passed in visits to the cinema, boating trips on the fjord, a dance at the working-men's club, or in long walks through the moonlit aisles of the communal forest. Towards the close of the summer season a week's holiday is always to be had for the asking; and then the town mouse will go out to its country relation and revel the period away amidst the unwonted emancipations of a mountain farm, the country mouse returning the visit to town when the cows have been housed for the long winter. At times a good-natured old uncle of a ship captain may even take a toil-worn and weakling girl on a free trip to London, and show her the Tower and the Crystal Palace of her school reader; and that is an event to be remem-

bered and talked over for many a long year to come. What mattered it to her if the outward trip was unduly prolonged by summer calms, or that contrary winds kept her beating about for a fortnight in the North Sea? She is used to the sea; and the unheard of privilege of being able to sit, with the ship's cat, on deck, knitting, and watching the evolutions of the men—who with the captain were all of her town, and in a sense related—more than made amends for the rather stuffy and higgledy-piggledy state of things which prevailed below. Besides, she has seen the world's greatest town—even London—and it would matter very little to her now when she died. But she does not die. Not a bit of her. The following winter she is as well and strong as ever, going to the bazaars and the dances, or partaking in toboggan, sleigh-driving, and ski-running expeditions with the best of them.

In the three great towns of the country, including the capital, the same conditions prevail, though on a larger and more cosmopolitan scale. Even among the best families the woman always finds something "to do"; for the parents are not always *velstaaende* (prosperous), and the commercial and other paths which were formerly wholly pre-empted by the men have been opened and graciously smoothed for her intrepid feet.

You will find her everywhere—as school teacher, housekeeper, stationmaster, masseuse, doctor, chemist's assistant, typist, or attending university lectures with an eye to things even more ambitious. There are, besides, innumerable charitable and rescue institutions where she may find an outlet for her irrepressible energies should she be fortunate enough to possess independent means. But an increasing population, and a not too prosperous state of trade, with their inevitable result in an ever-narrowing sphere for employment, puts her at times to sore straits for a means of a livelihood. Yet, rather than become a burden on her struggling parents or the community, she will, if the worst comes to the worst, even go into service, knowing full well that the position carries no degradation in a household whereof the mistress will occasionally share the work of the *pige* from the country. The latter knows of her unerring instincts how to keep her place, and to differentiate between her own status, that of the new lady *pige*, and the mistress who drops in during periods of stress to help peel the potatoes or mix a salad. The inherent vulgarity born of the public-house and low-class music-halls is conspicuously absent in Norway, and the cook who drinks, the maid who apes her social superiors, and the blousy old person of better days and a

battered bonnet, who chairs, and never under any circumstances touches a drop, "so 'elp 'er gracious!" are, like the nightingale, not indigenous. Poverty in town or country may mean the loss of many a little trifle that made up the sum of creature comfort, but it does not send indigent respectability down into the squalid deeps of shabby-gentility and questionable society. Blackguardism and crime have their allotted quarter in a few of the large towns in Norway, as they have in the towns of other countries, and they are usually to be found abutting the quays; but they are as prescribed and segregate as the China towns of New York and San Francisco.

In a comparatively large town, such as Christiania, there are naturally a leisured few who, especially in winter, can always set apart an indefinite interval of time for pleasure pure and simple; and there are a number of days and half days of public and other holidays—to say nothing of Sundays—which are also availed of by the less fortunate possessors of means. It would be a mistake to imagine that the system runs to all work and no play. There is play enough, though the thorough zest with which it is entered into would seem to point to there being very little to spare.

Then, how does the young lady of Christiania wile away her day during the winter solstice, and what constitutes her ideas as to play? *Entre nous* and fortified by my unbounded faith in the loyalty of my reader, I will tell you. She will, after having had her usual early morning cup of coffee, get up between the hours of nine and ten, when daylight is firmly established. She will then probably sit down to a breakfast consisting of bread and butter, an egg, a little bacon or a meat réchauffée, some cheese, and possibly a milk biscuit or two, with various kinds of marmalade and jam, washing down the whole with either coffee, tea, or chocolate. She will then, if the weather be fine, take her *ski* on her *kjælke* (bob-sleigh) and go up to Majorstuen, the terminus of the *trik*, or electric railway, to Holmenkollen. There she will meet her *veninde*—as pre-arranged. Now a *veninde*, as applied to one of her own sex, is scarcely met by our own more general term "friend," or even chum, or comrade. It is far more intimate. Her *veninde* and herself are mutual repositories of confidences which an Englishwoman would hesitate to entrust to her best friend. This blood-sisterhood of the *venindes* is unique in its way. It takes rise at a very early age, and practically endures throughout life. It implies absolute loyalty towards one another in

all the affairs of life—including love; and false indeed would be the *veninde* who ventured to set her cap at her *veninde's* lover presumptive before the latter has been rejected as utterly impossible. Every young Norwegian girl, whether lady or peasant, who is worth her salt, has her *veninde*; and their mutual correspondence when marriage or other reasonable cause has separated them in person, is a species of confidential information bureau for all that may socially transpire throughout the length and breadth of the land. The young man who takes up an appointment in distant Nordland may have put a good many hundred miles between himself and his fiancée in Christiania, and may consider himself in the minus position of the needle in the bundle of hay; but she has her own *trofast veninde* in the *folke skole*, or the post-office, or the vicarage of that inconsequential little Nordland town, and I can tell that young man that it will be very necessary for him to look well to the p's and q's of his daily life. A friend of the masculine sex is a *ven*, a term which is rather elastic, according to the nature and degree of the friendship. It may merely rank a little above *bekjendt* (an acquaintance), or it may denote a sweetheart; but whatever its current value it must give place later on to *forloved* (betrothed) and

mand (husband). Our little leisured one having met her own very particular *veninde*, and possibly their *vens* (for you can never reckon on the incidence of these happenings), takes the car and goes off up to Holmenkollen or Frognersæter. There, if tobogganing be the order of the day, they proceed to indulge in that sport to the top of their bent, and at the risk of life and limb negotiate the dizzy descent of the Korketrœkkeren (the Corkscrew), or the equally dangerous convolutions of the Helvedesving (Hell's turning), without the least show of hesitation. The steering is entrusted to the *ven*, who holds a long tapering pole under his right arm and manipulates the trailing end to the right or the left after the manner of a rudder. They may consider themselves particularly fortunate if, when solving these bob-sleigh problems, they have not to apply to the ambulance station for splints and bandages and accompany one of their number to the nearest hospital. But in the wild delight of the moment this is never thought of, and it really concerns them less than it does "pappa," who, in the columns of the town Press, never ceases to deplore the ever-increasing number of these toboggan casualties, and to denounce the authorities for their criminal supineness in the

matter. If the *före* (condition of the snow) is feathery and more suited to the ski—why, a ski-running expedition let it be by all means. Then with their skis firmly bound on, and knapsack on back, they will plunge into the forest wilds of Nordmarken, and by way of fjeld, defile, and frozen lake or brook, arrive at the ski-hut of their goal. Here they will boil their coffee and bring forth the contents of their knapsacks, which usually consist of *smörrebröd*, cakes and oranges; and then they will all sit down to have a real good time of it. The conversation waxes fast and furious, and they are all, to use their virile expressives, "talking into one another's mouths," and enjoying themselves "frightfully." Flirtation may follow as a very natural outcome of the situation. It may be guardedly flippant, and therefore innocuous, or it may be sentimentally mute, and consequently most dangerous. But what care they? They are quite alone in this primitive little hut: alone with Nature, and themselves — and Mrs Grundy has not yet learned to run on ski. Perhaps, emulating a *ven*, the girls may even light up a cigarette. Possibly—I do not know. I should be loath to say. I have never yet seen one of them smoke in public; but, as

we are all well aware, quæ fuerant vitia mōres sunt.

And so back to town again, which our exhausted little *veninde* reaches in time for a late dinner, at 3 p.m. This family meal is seldom a mute affair. The young people see to that in their somewhat riotous review of the morning's fun; and, *nolens volens*, old bourgeois "pappa" and his *hustru* (wife) are drawn into the conversational mêlée, much to the benefit of their respective digestions. Quietude only supervenes after the disposal of the coffee, when the old people will indulge in a nap, and the girls, bringing forth their embroidery, carry on the discussion in a respectfully subdued tone of voice. Later on they will all go out for a stroll in the park or *Karl Johan gade* (the combined Regent Street and Bond Street of Christiania), and perhaps wind up the evening with a visit to the theatre. The old people have a decided preference for the downright comedies of their classic Holberg —which are decidedly Jonsonian of plot and sentiment—or a problem of Ibsen, a query from Björnson, or, as a laxative, a less moralizing essay by a minor native dramatist; and here the general public are thoroughly with them in their support of the National Theatre in its endeavour

to inculcate and maintain a high standard of public taste. Nevertheless, neither the treasury receipts of the theatre, nor the morals of the public have been known to be adversely affected by an occasional appearance of the Geisha, or the boisterous indiscretions of Charley's amazing aunt. After the play papa is almost certain to treat them to a recherché little supper at the Teater Kafeen, and they do not in that case arrive home until the late, if normal, hour of twelve.

When the evenings are passed *en famille*, music and reading are much indulged in, with intervals of tapestry weaving, or a game of "l'Hombre," "Boston," or even "Bridge." But if a ball is on the tapis, then there will be no time for afternoon strolls, tapestry weaving, or anything else that is not of a preparatory nature for this greatest of all occasions. Balls are preceded by a substantial supper, and commence not later than nine o'clock, when everybody is expected to arrive punctually to time. Light refreshments are served at twelve o'clock, and dancing usually comes to an end at 2 a.m., though there is, as may be supposed, no very hard-and-fast line drawn in that respect. There are no chaperons other than the hostess, who is respon-



CHRISTIANIA. FROM THE ROYAL PALACE

sible for the behaviour of all her guests. At public balls, however, there are usually two chaperons who undertake that collective duty. The ball is generally opened with a polonaise, followed by all the usual modern dances; but in Norway the waltz has always been the abiding favourite. Elderly people are as seldom in evidence at these functions as the wall-flower. Indeed the entire affair would seem to be for the exclusive benefit of the young people, who are certainly of the most tireless dancers of the peoples of the earth. Our little *veninde* is there as a matter of course, and despite her Holmenkollen activities, tripping it with the merriest of them. She thinks nothing of attending three or four dances in the course of a week during the season, even if they result in a semi-somnolent condition of inertia during the hours of the sun. And she looks very nice indeed in a lovely creation (to me in confidence whispered) of white *bobinet* over a white *silksatin*, whatever that may be, though it might, and really does, pass in the brilliant light for the very best grade of silk. She has no need to be told how to conduct herself for the occasion, and as a young Norwegian lady should conduct herself in a Norwegian ballroom; that it is bad form, for

instance, to engage herself beforehand for all the dances on her card; to remove her gloves, except at table; to assent to a gentleman (who may not know better) dancing with her on two consecutive occasions, or while dancing to look her partner too frequently in the face, or, under any circumstances whatever, to lay her head on his manly shoulder. And the gentleman (who is by no means permitted to have it all his own way) is particularly cautioned, when she refuses him a dance, not to commit the *bêtise* of engaging the lady sitting by her side. He will be good enough to go back to the place from whence he came, there to remain until he shall have recovered sufficiently to engage somebody else. Common politeness will also demand of him that he shall not always dance with the young lady with whom it might seem to him to be a necessity of his life that he must always dance, or to dance so often with any one lady as to evoke general observation, if not surmise. They are both of them adjured to refrain from continuing in a round dance until they must perforce gasp for the breath of life, and that during the *Kontredans* (Les Lanciers) they must give that necessary attention to their movements which the grace-demanding evolutions of that figure is rather

particular about. All this and the dangers attending the drinking of iced drinks when she is heated, our little *veninde* has already learned of her natural aptitudes; and for the rest, I thank you, she is quite capable of taking care of herself.

CHAPTER XII

OUT OF DOORS

THE time-bound tourist racing along the beaten routes from Christiania, Bergen, Trondhjem, or Skien, when Norway is at its hottest (and dustiest) sees little enough of the home beyond that which may be noted in crowded hotels where the management and staff have been temporarily brought together to meet the summer occasion; and his fjordal brother of the steam-yacht, or so-called "floating hotel," who, in the intervals of conducted raids on local waterfalls and ancient churches, eats and sleeps aboard, is no whit better informed. For it is precisely at this period of the year that the Norwegian townsman also converts himself into a tourist in his own or some other country, or retires to his upland villa, or to his favourite watering-place: leaving his business and his home respectively to his managing clerk and the servants. As for the *bonde*, or peasant, and his "little lot," they are practically *non est* so far as the British tourist and his pursuit of home life

data are concerned; for they have bundled out of their home, or *vaaningshus*, into the *bryggehus* (an auxiliary dwelling) for the work of the summer, or they have locked up both establishments and gone off to their mountain annexe, the *sæter*, where the *en deshabille* requirements of their vocations may render them less eager of domiciliary visit. Not that they are inaccessible. Far from it. The Norwegian gentleman's sense of hospitality is at all seasons of the most concrete, as many a dyspeptic tourist has found to his cost, and his villa is as freely "at your disposition" as that of the proudest hidalgo of Old Spain: which he is at pains to tell you, with interminable "skaals," boldly, naturally, and without the least *arrière pensée*. Not so the peasant. He is always very pleased to see you, or anybody else, at any time, convenient or otherwise, and his wife will place before you sufficient food and drink to maintain a small family for a week; but her husband will not tell you that he is always very pleased to see you, or that his house, and its larder, are permanently at your disposition. He expects that you will know all this, in reason, and without the telling; and he will, moreover, expect the same consideration from you should he drop in upon you in town later on. He is a dour, taciturn man, whose



ANCIENT WOODEN CHURCH AT FANTOFT, NEAR BERGEN

only fault from the tourist's point of view is his insatiable curiosity as to your age, occupation, and the intimate concerns of *your* home life. His wife and his daughter, if he have any—and he always does manage to have them—will not participate to any extent in this inquisition. As gossips they are merely so many charming accessories after the fact.

Nevertheless a good deal of the domestic affairs of the summer peasant may come within the ken of anyone who will bear in mind that the entire country from the North Cape to Cape Lindesnæs is practically free to all and sundry who have the average endowment of tact. There are no rights-of-way in Norway in the strict English sense of the term, and woods, plains, mountains, hills, standing lakes, and dales, are the common property of tramp and tourist alike, provided tilled lands are respected and no fires lit within, or in the neighbourhood of, sun-baked forests. Therefore have I been oftentimes diverted during cross-country tours by the sight of Pater- and Mater-familias Britannicus and their progeny stumping along a dusty main road during their between-meal constitutionals, quite oblivious of the fact that the innumerable paths leading up to the farms on the beautiful and breezy hills above them were public thorough-

fares, and that a friendly "drop in" at any of the said farms would be very far from unwelcome. I have even been so temerous as to stay the procession in its stolid career and explain the position succinctly and in detail to them; but seldom with any favourable result.

"Oh really," Pater-familias might say, with an apprehensive glance at my collarless shirt, "how *very* funny!"

"But they've got dangerous cows, and that sort of thing, haven't they?" Mater-familias might put in, as she noted my omission of that morning's shave. "I hate cows — dangerous cows I mean." And with an "It wouldn't do in *our* country—what" from the progeny the procession would resume the even, and dusty, tenor of its way.

The home instinct with its "Hi, measter! That beant no public pa-ath," was too strong within them to be overcome by the mere suggestion of an unshorn countryman, a stranger, and without a collar to his shirt.

The disintegrating effect of summer upon the home life in Norway is pretty much the same as in other lands. Everybody who can afford it disappears for the nonce from the ken of everybody who cannot afford it, and the stay-at-homes are as seldom at home as they can possibly help. It is

the dead hand of winter that brings Norsemen together under the roof-tree and evokes that love of the *hjem*, which is in no wise inferior in tenderness to that of their Germanic kin of the south; and it is therefore from the close of the tourist season until the commencement of the spring ploughing that the people are "at home" in the more intimate sense of the word. Weather conditions being favourable, that is to say normal, the outdoor country is, in my opinion, at its best in early June and September—before and after the advent and departure of the tourist. It is difficult to write other than in superlatives when the former month with its genial temperature and glorious wealth of bloom is under consideration. In Lowland, and especially coastal Norway to the south, the length of the seasons proximate very closely to our own. Winter begins after the October rains and is practically at an end in April or the middle of May; and although a cold snap may set in after February its duration, owing to the sun's increasing altitude, is seldom prolonged. The final "clean up" of the winter ice and snow is certainly not favourable for sight-seeing, except so far as the swollen grandeur of the waterfalls and rivers, with their log freights, is concerned, and it is just then probably that Norway is at its worst

from the pedestrian's point of view. Yet it is astonishing how quickly and adeptly sun, rain, and a belated fall of snow will act the scavenger and sweep the whole soiled mass of frigidity into the seas.

"What a pity it is that the English tourist does not come out to us earlier in June," peasants have remarked to me many a time and oft. "They would then see our country at its very best, when the roads are free from dust, the waterfalls and cascades at their grandest, and the hills and meadows unshorn. But I suppose they put it off until July and August *because they are afraid of the cold.*"

Now a pretty intimate knowledge of both countries has long since convinced me that on this question of tolerating cold—to say nothing of heat—the average Englishman is no less hardy than the Norwegian, if not hardier. This may seem very like heresy to those who have been imbued with a sense of the superlative hardiness of the Hardy Norseman. "Englishmen and dogs," saith the Spaniard, "always walk on the sunny side of the street," and it would be rude to contradict him. This idiosyncrasy, however, would not excite undue remark on a hot summer's day in Norway; but I can vouch for the Britisher's predilection to braving

the worst possible winter weather just for the mere "fun of the thing" when no Norwegian, to say nothing of the dog, would think of abandoning his place by the stove. Personally I have always gone about in the coldest of winters in South and South-East Norway *sans* overcoat and gloves (to the unmitigated astonishment of the native) without experiencing any particular discomfort—though to *drive* without them would have been folly—for I soon found that a brisk walk in the frostiest weather (provided that it be bright, clear, and windless) will always give to one the required degree of circulation. Of course during blizzard-time or cold weather in the highlands this would be impossible, but I am writing now from the point of view of a resident in the more genial coastal districts. Neither can I remember ever having been laid up between blankets with a cough, or a severe cold, although I have a very lively recollection of my annual three days in bed, *and* the bronchitis kettle, when I have resided in London. During the winter season in Norway a peasant, whether in comfortable circumstances or in receipt of outdoor relief, would never dream of going to bed in a room wherein there was no fire in the stove, and stoves are kept going all day long in the draught-proof living rooms as a matter of course. Con-

trast this with the lot of thousands of English families (not always of the poor) whose bedrooms are innocent of fires in the coldest of weathers, and whose draughty living-rooms, of the jerry-built type, can never be quite heated to comfort pitch. The Norwegian business man of the towns has no urgent call to face inclement weather. The town he may happen to be living in is, comparatively speaking, a small one, his office with its clerks and telephones often adjoins his drawing-room, and a visit to the bourse, theatre, club, or house of a friend is only a matter of a few hundred yards' walk, or drive, well wrapped in furs. The London merchant, or clerk, on the other hand, has to turn out of his suburban home in any kind of winter weather —indeed his presence in the house after 9 A.M. (bronchitis apart) is almost resented as a sort of breach of faith. He has then to await trains on cold wind-swept railway platforms, and pass the greater part of the day amid perfect mælströms of icy draughts. Granted that Norway, thermometrically considered, has a far colder winter climate, that of England, and especially London, is the more dangerous of the two. It would not be too wide of the mark to say that with our houses and their heat-wasting open fire places there are few among us who, in his inner conscience,

may truthfully affirm that he is really quite able to get that amount of even permanent warmth which his nature demands of him. The Norwegian from time immemorial has adapted his house and its heating arrangements to meet winter conditions, and whatever his circumstances he has no occasion to go "freezing around" on the grin-and-bear-it system so widely in vogue in practical England. Verily is Norway a country wherein to keep warm of winters. But you can have too much even of the best of good things; and the Norwegian peasant has it when he fires up his stove to cremation point, and suffers in consequence from chronic *Krim* or colds.

CHAPTER XIII

DARKER NORWAY

THE Charity of Norway is without bounds. I have been told by a minor official in a small town that his salary of 2000 kroner a year would have been more than ample for the upkeep of himself, his home, family, and servant, were it not for the constant appeals on behalf of necessitous cases scarcely within the scope of the poor laws, or the benevolent bequests of that district. The catalogue was certainly long and miscellaneous, including as it did contributions to widows of fishermen who (often with all their sons) had been lost at sea, bazaars in aid of home and foreign missions, the setting up of a local *bonde*, who had been burned out of house and home, the provision of a new fishing smack, or a new net, for a struggling fisherman with a sick wife and a host of children, earthquakes in Italy, raffles on behalf of the sick and helpless, floods in France, a town wiped out by fire further along the coast, *et hoc genus omne.* In addition to these there were the constant little outlays for

birthday presents for his family, and his neighbours' families, confirmation presents and wedding presents, in all their metalliferous, and jewelled stages; and of course there were the innumerable Christmas, New Year, and kindred seasonable offerings. They had all to be contributed to, ay, and to the last farthing. The only consolation remaining to him (though I am bound to say he looked remarkably well on it) was that everybody else had to do the same thing, and that they were all, therefore, in the same condition of financial depletion. And I quite believed him. The *bymand* would seem to be thoroughly imbued with the Dickensian sentiment (his daughters have read their "Boz" from cover to cover) in these matters, and his wife and the said daughters love to figure as Dame Durdens and Lady Bountifuls in hospitals, slums, or the cottages of the respectable indigent. They have no ear, nor heart, for latter-day theories of the lethal chamber for the physically unfit, and will tell you, with a blaze of indignation, if you are rash enough to broach the subject, that if the "Herre Gud" above them is as mindful of one of these soul-containing little cripples as He is of a sparrow, or a blade of grass, it will be a dangerous venture indeed for any one of us to hamper Him in His polity; and, moreover, that you ought to be

thoroughly well ashamed of yourself—so there! And there you absolutely are. It would almost seem (*pace* the evolutionist) as though the very virility of the race, such as we have it in Norway in a high degree, is rather a result, than otherwise, of these fostering tendences.

And I also quite agreed with this minor official of the nominal 2000 kroner a year, after discussing the subject from every point of view, that there was no conceivable way of avoiding these charities—more especially having in mind the vast centrifugal powers of the great bourgeois machine before alluded to; and when, after selling me half-a-dozen 50 öre lottery tickets for a house and furniture for which I really had no use, he complained that whereas he, as a *bymand*, had to contribute in cash, the *bonde* invariably did so in kind, I was thoroughly with him in his plaint. For in all the years I have known the *bonde* I have never seen him (rich or poor) take a farthing piece from his purse and bestow it on anyone poorer than himself. I am willing to swear an affidavit on that. If it should reach his ears that the Herr Grosserer, or some half-demented Englænder, has contributed fifty kroner to a worthy cause he will merely remark that they might well have made it a hundred, or even a thousand kroner, of their superfluity. He looks

upon it as an act less of charity than self-righteous ostentation. To me this *bonde* has always remained a paradox in his views on petty economy, or *la haute finance*. As previously hinted he may have his purse well filled with monies, and yet never think of giving the least fraction of it away to mute want—who would, as certainly never dream of appealing to him for it; but he will tell it (if he should notice it) to go home to his *kona* (wife), knowing full well that it will get all it needs of food, with perhaps an old skirt or a pair of stockings thrown in on her own account. And if he have no monies it will make no difference; there will be yet of food, and to spare in his larder, and mute want may run away off to his *gaard* and help itself to all it can physically contain. The same economics apply to his *Kona*. If his purse be stuffed to repletion with paper, bronze or nickel, it will make no manner of difference to her. He has his decided opinion on the policy of entrusting a wife with specie. She can go to the *Landhandleriet*, where he owes a great deal more than he ought to, and see if she can coax a pair of new boots, or some dress material, out of the *landhandler* on the strength of her *mand's* alleged windfall. If he have no available cash, and the *landhandler* remains obdurate, why then

she may go without—just as he has got to do. The wife of the farm labourer, or the *pladsmand*, or the *husmand*, in urgent need of cash, can go to a neighbour of same degree and wash, bake, or sew for it, provided that it do not interfere with her home duties; and there will be no disgrace attached to this work; for the wives, or daughters, of the said farm labourer, *pladsmand* or *husmand*, may have to come and wash, bake, or sew for her when her *mand* is known to possess coin; for which services *bonde* etiquette demands that he shall pay in good mint of the realm. Again, and with very few exceptions, should the *bonde* become suddenly, and unexpectedly, rich through the death of a relation, or other form of luck, he will not be satisfied until he has lost the whole in wild-cat speculation, with the certain prospect of remaining up to his ears in debt for the rest of his life. I am not so certain but that this last trait is not, to a large extent, national, and despite the Herr Grosserer's very indignant disclaimer, "Don't talk to me about *stormand's galskab*"—or the mania for being of greater consequence than you actually are—"in connection with these *bonde folk!*" he will angrily exclaim when he, so to speak, "flies off the handle" at the suggestion, "It's nothing of the kind. We may, in a measure, and of

certain notorious instances, have merited that term of reproach; but with these *bönder* it is quite another thing altogether. It is nothing more nor less than vulgar ostentation!" Finally, the *bonde* in his dealings with *vexel obligationer* (bills) is no less inscrutable of financial procedure; for he will back them with the same cheerful avidity which he will look for, and get, from a relation or a neighbour. But when it comes to a question of a bargain, be it a horse, a parcel of land, an old brass-cased watch, or a marriage settlement, you will find none shrewder, none more litigious, if law-knowing, and none more claimant for both ends of the stick of contention than the Norwegian *bonde*. Yet his alms are always forthcoming, if always in kind; and here it is just possible that he exhibits a greater degree of shrewdness than the *bymand* is disposed to give him credit for.

There are no pawnbroker shops in the country districts as might be inferred among communities where the credit system is the only possible system that may shelve indefinitely a general cataclysm of the home life. The *Landhandleriet*, or *Handels husi*, as the *bonde* calls it, is its rural substitute, and the *landhandler's* complaisance the only source of relief outside the *fattig kasse*, or poor-box. I have the honour to

account a number of these *landhandlers* among my personal friends, and during many years' experience of their methods of doing business, I can aver with some degree of authority that I have only in very rare instances known one to abuse his position. They usually run the post office and telephone station of the village, and of course supply every description of food, clothing, implement, and utensil likely to be required by the villagers. The latter are very extensively on the "Dr" side of their books, but provided that they pay something on account from time to time, and do not outstay the three years' limitation as ordained by statute, they are permitted to muddle through as best they can. What the *landhandler* may not know about their private or business affairs is certainly not worth the knowing, and as adviser and friend in connection with his dispensary for the necessaries of their lives, his status is far more essential, in the eyes of his humble clientéle, than that of *lensmand*, *præst*, or other official of the State.

The charity, or benevolence, of the towns usually takes the form of *legats* (bequests) and *stiftelser* (institutions) under stated and proper control. There are no fewer than three hundred of these in the chief towns, and they embrace every conceivable class of social need, from

night-refuges for men and women to distressed widows and daughters of Government officials. These, again, are supplemented by the untiring efforts of the ubiquitous Salvation Army, which has its branches in most of the towns. Its slum crèche in Maridalsvein, Christiania, is one of the marvels of what organized charity may accomplish in that field; and the ceaseless strivings of their "Brigadier" Fröken Othilie Tonning on behalf of Norway's submerged tenth have gained for her the unstinted praise of all her country-men. And Norwegians, I may tell you, have brought the art of laudatory comment to a very high degree of perfection; as witness: "She is like the fresh wind. She blows away all obstacles. Put her in front of a precipice, and she will manage to scramble up and over it. She induces people to come forward, she induces money from them: for she is the right 'man' in the right place. She is whole-hearted, self-negatory, pushful, not to say driving, She is the leader of the Salvation Army's work among the poor and the lost of our country." And it might well have been added without unduly straining the epithetical tension of the eulogy that she is only what the Norwegian lady ever is, at her best.

Nevertheless, and without in the least desiring

to stultify these good works (which are, after all, only according to the measure of the forthcoming means), one cannot help wishing that some portion of them, whether in the form of *legat*, *stiftelse*, or heart's-ease, might be extended to sickness and sorrow in the dreary solitudes of upland Norway. The wish has often been borne in upon my mind with peculiar poignance when, seated by the bedside of some poor creature *in extremis*, in a wretched one-roomed cabin, noting the ordered squalor of the apartment and its tin-pot furniture, hearing the rains beating unceasingly down (my thoughts reverting by sheer contrast to my last selskabial dissipation), I have suddenly caught the look of terrible unease and mute appeal from the moaning one on its miserable pallet of skin and straw. Believe me, it is not always as one sees it during the tourist season, or in the roseate pages of the optimist, summering it in the *gaard* of some comparatively speaking well-to-do and happier family, near the beaten route. There are valleys in Norway within a day's journey of the coast towns wherein the tourist, and the Herr Grosserer, have seldom or never set foot. There are elderly and very old people—chiefly women—in these valleys who have never seen these coast towns, nor any other towns, and are

without the least prospect of ever seeing one before they pass away. To babble to these poor landlocked ones of the marvels of the railroad, or the motor car, or the gambols of the mighty liner upon the storm-tossed and salt sea, and note the same look of gratuitous incredulity which probably adorned the face of the old lady who contemned the flying-fish hallucination in favour of the discovery of Pharaoh's chariot-wheels in the Red Sea, has been to me a source of pleasure long drawn out; and I may have possibly (Heaven forgive me for it!) improved on the occasion. These people are invariably poor, hopelessly in debt, and withal of a condition of penury that passeth all metropolitan conception; for it never whines under the worst conditions—never appeals. After all, the beaten routes provide but an infinitesimal portion to the knowledge we possess of the great buried life of the hidden *dals*. I have lived in them, these darkling valleys, summer out, winter in, and may, who knows? have learned to anticipate to some little extent the suppressed cry, or divine the veiled, if anguished look. In one such valley as these, a narrow, treeless cañon—a ruin of bog and fallen boulder, under almost ceaseless summer rains—with granite walls standing sheer three thousand feet



AN "EAGLE'S NEST" DWELLING, GEIRANGER. SHOWING, ON THE RIGHT, CHILDREN TETHERED OUT FOR SAFETY

high on either side, the walled-out sun shone not on my dwelling for four long winter months, and the half-a-score farmers (save the mark!) who subsisted on the breeding of a few sheep and goats, and the produce of their Crusoe-like patches of corn, could neither read nor write. But their children could, and can; for the authorities have since their day put up a little schoolhouse, with a harmonium, in the bottom of this well, and the illiterate old may now see a schoolmaster there, who washes his face and hands three times a day, and wears a double linen collar. Is it at all surprising that in this wilderness of inhabited, if uninhabitable crevices, little children should at times sicken, die, and be buried away in some hallowed spot, without medical attendance or certificate of death, and remain there an entire season without benefit of clergy; or that telling of these things, and of the home life of these forgotten ones to Norwegians of the town, I was as one speaking by the card of conditions of living which they had never seen or even dreamed of? And there is no one to blame; no one but these pig-headed, uncomplaining ones of the crevices, who will not abandon their impossible pursuits and homes, the pursuits and homes of their impossible forefathers, and come down within

some better hailing distance of the Herr Doktor, the Herr Præst, or his curate, the *kapellan*. The Government is certainly not to blame. No Government has a better and more up-to-date series of laws designed to meet this very condition of things. So conscientious is it about doing the right thing towards the public that it is continually revising, adding to, or repealing these laws at the bidding of *bymand* or *bonde* alike, and to an extent that renders it very difficult at times for the pig-headed ones to know, without legal assistance, where they really are. If, as has happened, such a little community as the above-mentioned should become bankrupt, and appeal to the Government to save its life, its cry will not have been uttered in vain, and the Government will even subsidise their little second-hand lake steamer, running at an annual deficit, in order that they may attend the church, or land their sheep and goats at the distant lake head. But the Government cannot do impossibilities. Were it to adopt West Ham principles and provide roads, steamers, motor cars, railways, churches, hospitals, and free libraries for every one of these little crevices, with the necessary officials to look after them, why, there would be no Government left. They have got to be reasonable, these marooned ones.

They cannot have it both ways. And they are reasonable, for they never complain. Indeed, if you took them in the bulk you might possibly be tempted to say that they were happy—in that condition of lugubrious felicity which may be even born of hopelessness. But there are individual exceptions that would damn all proof as to any rule obtaining, and it is the mute tribute of these derelict ones that makes for pity. The *præst* has his work more than cut out for him among his three parishes, with the three services required of him during alternate weeks in the three separate churches, and that very often without the assistance of a *kapellan.* His duties outside his pulpit are very onerous indeed, and he is constantly in sleigh or carriole attending at councils, weddings, funerals, and the bedside of the sick and the dying, and is, generally speaking, run off his legs. If these duties and the stress of weather do not admit of his attendance at one of these distant crevices to administer the last rites or bury the dead, no undue surprise may be exhibited at the omission. He is bound to, and will, come as soon as circumstances admit, and he will perform the earth to earth ceremonial with all due solemnity, and with, perhaps, a touching tribute to the virtues of their dear

brother departed. So *that* is right, and there can be really nothing to complain about; and you must remember that they are even worse off farther north, in Sweden, where the coffins are put away into a store-house until the spring and summer warmth admits of the frost-bound earth being opened to receive them. The Herr Doktor is no whit better off in the matter of leisure time. His district of visitation often comprises a *dal* extending to nearly a hundred miles in length. But he has his appointed places of attendance throughout his district on certain appointed days of the week, and there he is prepared to attend to patients who are capable of walking or driving to the *gaard*, wherein he dispenses his medicine or undertakes minor operations. If the case is serious, the patient must go into town to the *sykehus* (hospital) at his own charge, or if indigent, on a certificate from the commune. And just here the *legat* and the *stiftilse* would come in with immense benefit to many a sick one jolted along mountain roads, in and out of lake steamers and brake-vans on his or her excruciating day's journey to the town hospital. An auxiliary half-way-*sykehus* at the conjunction of some of these *dals* would be an inestimable boon to many a poor creature, to whom a long and tedious journey would otherwise mean serious complications. But

there are occasions when the sick of these distant crevices will give no sign, will not send for the Herr Doktor under any amount of amiable intimidation; or the cost entailed in fetching the Herr Doktor from the outside world to an almost hopeless case will only add to debts already insuperable. Then the little one sick will die, and there is no more to be said about it. Irresistibly the *legat*, the *stiftilse*, and, above either, the indomitable qualities of the Norwegian townswoman thoroughly roused come into the mind in this connexion, and to her (for she is now of the State) I commend the case of the stricken children of the *bonde* poor in all humbleness. The methods of the Salvation Army, however well-meaning, will scarcely apply here. The *bonde* farmer is pious enough, and he has his lay preachers and revivalist apostles in profusion. He is, moreover, apt to *slaa seg vrang* (get his back up) at what he would consider an unwarrantable invasion of the privacies of his home life. But his womenkind understand. The good work must be undertaken unostentatiously, almost of stealth, with the possibility of personal hardship and rebuff. But with the advice of the *præst* and his Frue, the Herr Doktor, and, above all, the *Jordmor*, the local midwife and faithful friend and confidant of the *bonde* woman, there may be

yet conveyed some measure of hope and comfort to the individual wrecks of many a distant vale.

When the *præst* is not available the funeral obsequies are arranged and carried out with all decency by the family and friends of the deceased. Women, other than the nearest relatives, and not always then, do not follow in the procession to the graveyard. The guests meet at the house of the departed at about 11 a.m., when a substantial meal is served to them. They afterwards assemble in the best room, where the coffin lies, and hymns are intoned and tributes to the dead delivered with a simple fervour that will often move the sympathies more effectually than the finest rhetorical effort. The coffin is then borne out and deposited on a sleigh, or cart, according to the season of the year, and the procession moves away to the little patch of consecrated ground on the hillside under a towering fjeld. Here some further hymns are sung and speeches are made at the graveside, and then the work of interment is begun. The friends of the deceased, dispensing with the services of a sexton, take spades and reverentially fill in the vacant space, heaping the mould and shaping it with all the adeptness born of their tilling experiences. A last hymn is then sung, and the mourners, kneeling in the snow or soil, remain

for an interval in silent prayer. In the northern parts of Telemarken I have seen these kneeling mourners mark with their forefingers the sign of the cross on the shaped sides of the grave, as they rose to their feet: some old-time ceremonial, possibly, now quite forgotten. Then the wreaths of spruce leaves, interwoven with ribbon and tinsel, are brought forward and laid on the grave, and the mourners return to the house of the dead one, where they are again provided with all the refreshments they require. It would have been done better, they will say, if the Herr Præst had been there. But the Herr Præst trusts them to see that the first portion of the service is carried out properly; and he will be there among them in the spring to complete matters, as surely as the first anemone shall herald his approach. There is nothing much the matter with the Norwegian Herr Doktor and Præst, more especially when one remembers that these brave fellows will cheerfully undertake a four days' winter journey, at risk of life and limb, across the frozen fjelds and storm-lashed estuaries of the far north to reach the bedside of the sick and the dying. But they cannot undertake impossibilities.

The very poor of the larger towns, and especially Christiania, are as well provided for

during the bitter months of winter, as they can reasonably expect. In their homes, when they possess one, they seem to subsist almost exclusively on bread-and-butter and coffee—especially coffee; and they have no particular relish for *melkemat*, or milk food, as they contemptuously term it. But there are occasions when they are bound to take what they can get, and then a Salvation Army, or other mission, ticket for *gröd* and milk at the local porridge station is by no means to be despised. The numerous public charities and private philanthropies of a people in whom the bump of benevolence is so phenomenally developed see to it that want shall not stare them too painfully in the face; and whatever the results of the labour exchanges in England may be, here in Norway they have certainly met the objects for which they were intended. The Salvation Army has also provided quarters for the homeless, where they may obtain a night's lodging for 25 öre, and the home missions furnish 2, 3, and 4 kroner tickets for provisions, or coals, which are negotiable at certain shops. There is even a *landsforening* for the, one would have thought hopeless, object of inducing tramps to settle down, and for taking charge of their children. The members of this *forening* pay a subscription of a krone a year,

and the society has several colonies in the being for the fostering and teaching of these little ones, each home containing from thirty to forty children. One of these homes or colonies is near Fredriksværn, not far from the seaport town of Larvik, and is well worth a visit by those interested in such matters. Tramp families have settled down to some extent near these refuges, and some of their members have even taken to work with a new sense of relish. The hospitals of the towns, and especially the great *epidemi-sykehus* of Ullevaal, outside Christiania, are ample for all requirements, and are of course conducted on similar up-to-date lines to those of other enlightened lands. Neither have the cripples been forgotten, and the quite palatial "Sophies Minde," in the form of a *hjem for vanföre* (cripples' home) is one of the many evidences of good work undertaken or inspired by the Norsewoman. The confirmed inebriate in both classes of town society has no occasion to continue in that abnormal condition of body and mind while there is an inebriates' home to receive him. A private *forening* has built several of these *alkoholisthjem*, where the well-to-do may endeavour to turn over a new leaf for a consideration of about 200 kroner a month, and there is another provided by the State, on almost gratis terms, to one and

all who may desire to be rid of their complaint. But in the gratis homes, of which there are several, the inmates must work. Among these last is the "*Stiftelse Emmaus Arbeidshjem for hjemlöse drikfældige mænd som vil reises*" (Emmaus Institute for homeless inebriates, willing to be reclaimed). The institution, which is on a religious basis, was founded in 1907 by a number of private people, and does not appeal to the public for support. The patients are selected exclusively from those who, as set forth, are inebriates and destitute of home, and applications from would-be paying patients are invariably refused. The period of voluntary incarceration is two years. There is no physical restraint of any kind imposed—beyond the absence of intoxicants—and kindly suasion is the principle with which the principal, Herr Jonas Pettersen, seeks (and with extraordinary success) to obtain his ends. Some of the worst characters from the town slums have been dealt with successfully at the institute's working colony near Seterstöen station, and, supplied with new clothes, and a situation found for them, they have gone back into the world as respectable and useful members of society.

The "Sanitetforening," assisted by the great body of the people, wages unceasing war against



PROCESSION OF CHILDREN ON THE NATIONAL FÊTE DAY, MAY 17

the common enemy, consumption. *Legats* for this object alone amount to over a million kroner. Each year the *forening* sends out millions of little artificial *maiblomst* (May flowers) which are retailed at 10 öre each. The flower is worn on the lappel of the coat or blouse, and they may be obtained anywhere. Little school children vend them from door to door, and on the great national fête day, May 17, when whole armies of children march in procession through the streets of all towns and villages, with flags flying and bands playing, the little *maiblomst* is almost as conspicuous as the confetti. Stamps of the ordinary postage kind, only somewhat larger, and with a portrait of some well-known Norwegian (such, for instance, as Björnstjerne Björnson) on the face, have been sanctioned by the Government for the use of the public in its pathetic campaign against a scourge which takes a yearly toll of 7000 of the total inhabitants of Norway. These stamps, which are of the value of 2 öre each, and marked "The war against consumption," are extensively sold, and, it being permitted to affix them to the ordinary stamped letter for the post, they serve to keep the public ever alive to the presence of the dreaded "white plague," and its obligation to fight it. There are also a number of open-air

sanatoria set aside for dealing exclusively with consumption. Where these have been founded from *legats*, the patients are afforded gratis treatment; but in the State sanatorium there is an inclusive charge of a krone a day.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PEASANT AND HIS HOME

A NORWEGIAN *bonde* is *not* a *persona grata* with the *bymand.* The Herr Grosserer will tell you that he is simply impossible. If you ask him why, he will further tell you, with a gesture of intolerance, that he is devoured by the chronic maladies of envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness, and that he will never permit anyone of his own class to attain to a higher social level without immediately pulling him down to his original bearings. His own young men, terribly in earnest, have to a great extent confirmed this description of him in their rather gloomy rhapsodies on the *bonde* home life as they have lived it. Herr Carl Nærup sums up the relative position of *bymand* and *bonde* as it appears in the *leit motif* of the novels of Arne Garborg—himself sprung from the soil, or rather the sand, for he is from Jæderen—as follows: "There are two peoples here in this country. The one, consisting of a fourth part, who dwell in the towns—officials, grosserere, etc.—an

exotic race, with high-sounding names of Low German origin, and an elegant, if overbearing, demeanour. This is the dominant caste, which is in possession of "culture" and the powers economic. The other consists of *bönderne*, the primal inhabitants and allodial proprietors of the land, who speak their own old idiom of pride. And these latter are the cowed—the caste of the slave! We see how" (in Garborg's *Bondestudentar*—peasant students) "this foreign culture thrusts itself into a Vestland *bonde* home, and spreads and grows until all is devoured: farm, land, the future, and all life's possibilities. And when the work of dissolution and destruction is consummated the country has gained a premature, clumsy creature" (the peasant student), "who can only muse as to how he may sell his precious education and his precious person to the best possible profit to himself. 'In a few years' time,' says Garborg, 'he will have entered into that circle of splendour and power of which he has always been dreaming — the highest possible attainable thing. Then he would with truth be able to say that he had, at last, reached his ideal. He could scarcely imagine anything more delightful than to be able to sit in an ancient parsonage and lord it over these *bönder*.'"

Thus Garborg, and, having read his novels in

the *bonde* vernacular and dwelled for some considerable period in the tents of his caste, I can endorse in some measure his earlier and more pessimistic views—views, by the way, which would seem to emphasize the Herr Grosserer's opinion in no little degree. But matters have very much improved since these written opinions first took the country by storm, and, as Herr Carl Nærup very justly opines, although the book in question (*Bondestudentar*, 1870) contributed largely to the remodelling of social conditions in the country, were any latter-day writer to depict the feud of the two cults as it at present exists, the result would not be on all fours with that arrived at by the Arne Garborg of 1870.

I have known the *bonde* very intimately from his childhood upwards, and have probably had as many opportunities of gauging his moral worth as any of his young men so terribly in earnest; and really, do you know, I am bound to say that, with all his idiosyncrasies, he is not at all the bad sort the Herr Grosserer would have me believe. But you have got to know him first, and to know him you must live with him, and, watching the Fates as they trip him up, note how, under the circumstances, he bears himself as a man. Now, the Herr Grosserer

would not live with him for a wilderness of Fates, and, sooth to say, while the *bonde* continues to rule his household on the principle of "what is good enough for me is good enough for a king," his home will not offer any particular inducements to the Herr Grosserer to enter it; and, mind you, the Herr Grosserer is not at all particular when it comes to straining a point.

What the *bonde* may think of the Herr Grosserer it would be hard to say, for he never alludes to him in any shape or form: sitting smoking—everlastingly smoking—in his corner by the stove. And whatever amenities his student son may embody in his books, or thunder forth from his place in the national Storthing, they are of no concern whatever to the old man. But you may have your own good grounds for believing that he looks upon all *bymænd* pretty much as our own "hayseeds" from "way-back" regard the cult of London Town: that is to say, as a cult sempiternally carrying in its pocket the golden brick, the three cards, the three thimbles, and many another requisite of the mobsman's profession. The *bonde* has been probably told by his father how, in the good old days, when timber, as an article of foreign commerce, was a very desirable commodity, the Herr Grosserer, in the guise of a merry *colporteur*, and accom-

panied by a crate of *akvavit* (the Norwegian potato-stilled and carraway-flavoured equivalent of whisky), darkened the portals of his *gaard* with his portly person, and how, after an unspeakable orgie, which lasted out the entire week, he induced that trustful old father to sign away his proprietary rights in his forest for a mere song. There are likewise other legends, more or less apocryphal, and therefore not worth mentioning, which may have led to the permanently *vrang* attitudes of these two irreconcilables: irreconcilable on every conceivable point, except the main one, when they will march shoulder to shoulder to the frontier, sharing the same tent, eating out of the same porringer, and "skaaling" each other right heartily in whatever liquid may be available. Then, in their smart grey uniforms, and of their erect military deportment, you would not be able to tell, for nuts, which was the *bonde* and which was the Herr Grosserer. There is nothing very wrong with the *bonde* or the *bymand*. They know that much of each other, at all events; and as the latter is the product of the former—in the first, second, or third generation—I really do not see what they have got to be *vrang* about.

The *bonde* has had a fairly decent education

at the *folke skole* of his *bygd*, or parish, and can at least read, write, and figure for all the purposes which nature, and the authorities, intended him. As a schoolboy he has even had a better time, if such were possible, than the schoolboy of the towns; and his *bonde* schoolmaster, who in distant *bygdes* is often peripatetic and house to house, is as complaisant and kindly as the worst truant might ever desire. And a right merry little fellow is this *bonde* schoolboy, and a venturesome, withal. His ideals of chivalry are, perhaps, not on the same lines as those of our Board School lads, which, in the circumstances, is scarcely to be expected. There are as many ways of regarding chivalry from the various national view-points as were at the disposal of Sir John Falstaff in his definitions of honour. The *bonde* small boy may, for instance, when the spirit of mischief moves him, tease his little sister most persistently and mercilessly; tease her until, finally, even her equable temper will give way, and she will rise up in her wrath and chastise him. Whereat he will run howling to his home, and appeal for immediate and condign punishment on her devoted head. And she catches it, there and then, for no mere *pige-barn* has any right to execute judgment upon the boy of the house;

and who is there in all this wide world who would dream of raising a hand on *her* behalf? But she takes her punishment bravely, and without evincing the least sign. It is the *métier* of her sex in Norway to exhibit a stoical front in all periods and stages of physical pain. In sorrow it is quite another affair. Therefore, she would rather die than cry out before all these *mand* folk. Later on, however, when every one has forgotten the circumstance, and her, she will steal off into the woods, and there, in some pine-canopied recess, she will cry, and cry, until it becomes a physical impossibility for her to cry any more. These are traits in the characters of the two *bonde* sexes which Ibsen noted in Per Gynt and Solveig, and ear-marked unto all time.

When the *bonde* lad leaves school and is confirmed, he undergoes a sea change, and becomes less desirable. Adopting, in his new status of responsible manhood, the superior airs of his *bonde* elders, he assumes the same expression of sullen gravity, lolls about with his hands in his pockets—everlastingly smoking—and is, generally speaking, decidedly, if designedly, loutish and unlovely. He has moreover from a very early age noted that the women-folk of the household are of considerably less account than himself

and his brothers—to say nothing of his father, and under the centripetal attraction of that grim old man, he gradually drifts away from the better influences of his mother and sisters, and leaves the latter henceforth and for evermore to their own devices. Whatever their moral worth may be (good temper, reticence, and chastity are the main considerations) they have their appointed place and degree of value, as any other creature or chattel upon the farm; and were you ever in possession of the *bonde's* inner confidences (which you will never be, for they are as unattainable as the confidences of Hindostan) he would probably tell you that, ranking after the Almighty himself, the *mand*, the son, the horse, the *kona*, the cattle, and the daughters would fall by easy gradation into their allotted places in the natural scale of domestic appraisement. He seldom or never takes up a book under any circumstance of opportunity, confining himself to a glance at his father's paper when the critical comments of the old man would seem to call for verification, and his amusements are chiefly in the direction of open-air dancing and midnight orgies, of a nature, and in places, known only to himself and his congeners. And here, whether as a land *bonde* or a sea *bonde*, he constitutes a positive moral danger; for whatever faults his sisters

may possess (the worst of them is an unbounded admiration for his superior and "manly" ways), there are few other women of their class who have a better claim to lament that "the man tempted me and I fell" than the too-trusting and much-abused *pige* of *bonde* Norway. Therefore is it encouraging to note that by enrolling women into the service of the police for the main purpose of safeguarding these too-trusting sisters during their visits to town, the authorities have been aroused to a danger no less morally destructive than that of the white slave traffic of other lands.

By and by this *bonde* lad will marry and settle down on his father's farm, which, as the eldest son, and at the death of the old man, he has the option of purchasing, and he will be as faithful a husband as the *pige* of his choice will be a faithful wife to him. Infidelity and divorce among the *bönder* are as rare as the sight of a childless couple. However frisky a young girl may have been during the pre-marital period, and whatever disparity there may be in their ages and temperaments at marriage, the husband is her *mand* for better or for worse, and, with rare exceptions among a low and perverted tramp caste, she is faithful unto him till death doth part them. Incidentally she is confined to her home and its duties for the remainder of her natural

life—if he should survive her; but never under any circumstances will she flirt with, or even recognize an old sweetheart; and the dancing green, and the rendezvous of marriageable youth will know her no more. These wifely observances are imposed by *bonde skik*, or custom, which is as irrevocable as the Medean statutes of old-world fame. The disparity of age referred to is painfully in evidence at times among the *husmand* and *pladsmand* class, who seldom find it good for man to be alone. I have in mind a typical case of a widower who, remarrying (he was already grandfather to a considerable progeny) at the age of sixty with a girl of twenty-five, was, on his eighty-first year, grandfather to another brood, and father to a child of ten years —all of his children being, to quote an Irishism, "the very spit of himself." The result, of course, was that he was no longer able to provide for the needs of three generations of hungry ones, and the over-burdened "poor box" of that little commune sustained a shock which it has probably not recovered from to this day.

As a married man and a father, the *bonde* withdraws entirely into himself. At forty-five he is an old man, as is his wife an old woman at thirty-five. Physically considered they are by no means venerable; but these are the ages

when they may expect to hear irreverent youth refer to them as *gamlen* and *gamla* respectively. Next to money, youth and physical strength are the *bonde's* standard of all that is humanly desirable. I was once told by a young *bonde* that a friend of his, a man of thirty, was about to marry a *gammel jente*, or old girl, and on inquiring as to her age, was told that she was twenty-seven! Early marriages are the vogue throughout Norway and in all classes, though in a poor country, and the consequent uncertainty of income, engagements are often of long standing—seven years being not at all an unknown period of waiting. The law of his land ordains that the *bonde* shall be entitled at marriage to one-half of his wife's fortune unless it be otherwise tied up, and that one-half of his worldly goods shall at his death go to his wife, and the remainder, in equal portions, to his children. But, as previously pointed out, the eldest son has the option of purchasing the farm; and as he is seldom with the means to that end, he will do so out of the proceeds of the sale of the forests, or by mortgage, or both—which is a prolific cause of the hopeless state of debt which follows from generation to generation. His father may not during his lifetime bequeath more than a quarter of his personalty to others, and should his extra-

vagant methods of living or his mental status tend to endanger the prospects of his heirs, the latter can, on appeal to a *magistrat*, have him and his affairs placed under the control of a trustee, to whom he must refer on all matters of expenditure. If incompatibility of temperament should supervene in their married relations, the *mand* and his *kona* can (for once in a way) *agree* to lay their case before the *magistrat*, and the latter having vainly endeavoured to bring about a reconciliation, is bound to grant them a three years' separation decree, during which period they must live apart. At the expiration of this interval of grace, and failing reconciliation, they are practically divorced, and are at liberty to re-marry, the children of the first marriage being equally distributed between them, or in the event of alimony being forthcoming from the father, the mother will take them all under her care. The laws relating to marriage and property, as indeed all laws involving civil matters, are seldom hard and fast, and they usually contain provisos granting the parties concerned the benefit of mutual arrangement, or arbitration, within the lines duly set forth for the employment of these moral safety-valves.

Much may be said, in praise or depreciation of *bonde* characteristics, according to their parti-

cular form of appeal to foreign criticism. There can be no question as to his honesty. He will never "go back" on his word—indeed the law will not allow him—if it be given in the presence of a witness to the bargain, and his signed letter of promise requires no stamp of revenue or witness to his signature. In both instances the word or the signature is binding on either party in a court of law. He looks upon theft as a crime ranking considerably above assault with intent. You may leave your money, or other valuables, about on his tables and drawers with the most absolute immunity; and as you drive along his high roads you will very often become aware of articles of lost property (sometimes of a most disconcerting description) hanging from the boughs of the trees, where he has thoughtfully placed them for possible reclaim. He will never open the sealed private letter of another person under any circumstances whatever, and the postal delivery, which is often placed in an open box at the roadside for all and sundry to reject, or help themselves to, according as the addresses may decide, is an absolutely safe delivery so far as your particular letter is concerned; but he, or any of his household, will, in your presence or out of it, read your postcard, or any other overt communication, exhaustively

and without the least sense of wrong, for the simple reason that they *are* overt, and therefore common property, and you are quite at liberty under similar opportunities to do the same. He is a hard drinker, when there is any drink at hand; but without the occasion he is quite satisfied to remain sober. He is never a confirmed "boozer," and indeed the demands of his *gaard*, to say nothing of the *magistrat*, and a possible trustee, will not admit of it. He is loyal to a degree (the Herr Grosserer is not going to have it all to himself), though, as usual, he never says anything; but you will always find the portraits of his king and queen hanging up to the best advantage in his best room, and he will tramp many a mile to verify that precocious little Prince Olaf, who has bewitched all his women folk, and get a handshake from a *kong*, whose heartfelt solicitude for his welfare even he with all his *mistœnksomhed* has never had a doubt. It is quite touching to see his old blue eyes light up with enthusiasm when his *Huldre Dronning* (fairy queen), as he is pleased to call the daughter of our English Edward, appears before him in his mountain fastnesses in all her queenly graciousness, and, of her father's spirit, takes him captive.

It has been the custom to liken the *bonde* to

the Highlander, but I could never quite see the moral and physical connexion. The Scotchman has his ideals, and his traditions of trial and proof, and beyond an equal measure of piety he is, all round, the better man—better, that is to say, from the British point of view. On the other hand, it has never occurred to anyone to compare the *bonde* with the "colleen" and the "bhoy" of peasant Ireland; because this would be impossible. The two peoples are the very antithesis of each other in every quality. It has also been stated that a *bonde* will not work unless he is compelled by need to do so, but I do not think that there is any justification for the statement. The upkeep of his farm, with its inevitable mortgage, and his compulsory duties on the local council, leave him with very little spare time on his hands; and in poor communities, with the *landhandlers'* debit account and the disgrace of the *fattig kassen* ever before each individual, the ball of self-preservation must be constantly kept on the roll, or woe betide the unfit who fail in the necessary powers of financial propulsion. The Norwegian *bonde* is very notably a man of peace: which is a great virtue. When I affirm, as I may do without any qualms of conscience, that I have never yet seen him—and rarely a *bymand*—stand up to

another man in open fight, spirituously intact, and under circumstances of deadly insult, it should speak a good deal for his reserves of forbearance. And he is no coward—neither he nor the *bymand*—for they will, with or without a moment's notice, willingly risk their lives to save those of others. And their women will do as much. The peace instinct is inherent with them. Exclamations of anger, or even impatience, are seldom heard among either class; and cursing, together with drunkenness, like the ancient methods of veneer and stained glass, will soon be numbered among the lost arts of Norway. Drinking and the public spectacle of drunken men are far less obvious than in England; and since the adoption of local option and the voting down of licences broadcast, the Norway of 1911 is a very great improvement in that respect on the Norway of the '70's. Statistics go to prove very conclusively that there is always a recrudescence of inebriety during periods of prosperity, which is certainly good evidence that the increase is not due to the despairs of poverty and want. Drink substitutes, such as *politur*, or furniture-polish, ether, methylated spirits, and *laddevin* (a debased wine) still find their way, in spite of all restrictive measures, into mountain-cabin and slum; but statistics do

not go to show (shocking as the consequences of this traffic must be) that insanity or gastric and peritoneal troubles are in proportion to the frightful results that might have been expected from the consumption of these poisons. A very powerful party in the country, chiefly *bönder*, is agitating for absolute prohibition by statute, which is equivalent to dealing with the effect rather than the cause. And the cause is, that lack of culture which knows no moral restraint. Were this party to educate its *bonde* brothers into a sense of reasonableness in all things—even *akvavit*—there would be very little necessity for measures of compulsion. And they would accomplish this more readily by example than by preachment, or threats.

In all contentions affecting his personal honour and good name the *bonde* prefers in the first instance to leave the matter in the hands of the local *Forligelseskommission*, or Court of Reconciliation, for adjustment, and, failing this, he will carry the matter on from court to court, until his litigious cravings have been quashed with his case, or satisfied by damages and costs. But however peaceful he may be when sober, in his cups he is as quarrellous as the weasel, and then it is not safe to have any dealings with him ; for the laws of his country grant him extenuating

circumstances when the liquor is in, and he may murder, or manslaughter, or cripple you under comparatively trivial penalties—provided that he has previously gotten himself unto the necessary state of irresponsibility. The death penalty by beheading is not now carried out, and, indeed, the law-abiding instincts of all classes very rarely call for it.

The etiquette of the *bonde* is as formal in its way, and to be observed, as that which governs the daily life of the Herr Grosserer. It is based on a preternatural gravity and the avoidance of all display of temperamental incontinence. When, as a stranger, you arrive on the high stone steps leading to his inner dwelling, and after knocking on the door without any result, open it, you will seldom find him prominently in evidence, and you will experience some difficulty in differentiating him from the other men in the *stova*, or main room; for they are all in shirt sleeves, and looking as alike as peas in a pod. Incidentally the room is very warm (whether it be summer or winter), the windows and doors are all closed, and tobacco smoke pervades the place as densely as in a skipper's cabin. In the one-roomed house of the poorest *bonde* all cooking is performed on, or in, the stove; and when the outside summer temperature is over



GENERAL ROOM IN A PEASANT'S COTTAGE

80 degrees in the shade, and the one window not practicable of opening, it is not always safe, or even possible, to enter and pass the occupants the time of the day. When this inside temperature, which may be anything over 100 degrees, is maintained in contradistinction to an outside winter reading below zero, it may be not only inferred that all act of entry is positively dangerous, but that *krim*, or chronic catarrh, and bronchitis (to say nothing of phthisical transmission), is more evident than that robust state of health which the pure mountain air would, under other conditions, vouchsafe to the inmates. This tendency towards stuffiness, notwithstanding the great strides the *fri-luft*, or open air movement (after British example), has been making of late, is still very apparent in the towns, though, of course, to a much lesser extent, and passing along the streets on a very hot summer day you will notice that an open window is rather the exception than the rule. I have often been roused out of midsummer night dreams by clamorous, if very thoughtful, landladies calling my attention to the alarming fact that my window was wide open, and reminding me that pneumonia was the least of the troubles to be contracted by so rash an innovation. This notion is really the one standing obstacle to a

general adoption of the *fri-luft* principle; though I have my own suspicion that the spick-and-span condition of the town rooms, and the fear of intruding dust, have a great deal to do with it. Anyone who has occupied a cabin on the sunny side of a steamer, with the Herr Grosserer as a companion and the open or shut condition of the port-hole or door a subject of contention, will be, doubtless, in a position to throw some further light on this very important subject of proper ventilation.

Returning to the *stova*, the new hand will ask the *kona* if *han* (he) or the *mand sjölv* (the man himself) is in? To mention his name in full would not be strict *bonde* etiquette; nor would it expedite matters, for he has probably acquired three or four place-names if he have moved from one parish to another; though it will always be safe to refer to him by his Christian names of Anders, Knut, Sweyn, or Ola. But you need not allude to him or his caste in his immediate presence as *bonde* and *böndер*. He will prefer the emollients *landsmand* and *landsmænd*. Likewise, in writing to him, you will do well to address him as *Herr Gaardbruger, Anders Underbjerg*. Of course the Herr Grosserer does not like this, and insists on its being nothing more than vulgar ostentation; but really, and as between

ourselves, the *Herr Gaardbruger* does not care one snap of his horny thumb for the Herr Grosserer and all his "cultured" *fillegreier*, or fal-lals.

The *mand sjölv* will not come forward to receive you, but, pipe in mouth, from his reclining position on the bed, or from the stove side, he will listen gravely to all your genial incontinences, and, at their close, will simply remark "*god dag*." You note your breach of etiquette, and returning him the special "good day" due to him as master of the house, you revert somewhat crestfallen to the purpose of your visit, which is usually food: thereby exhibiting your further ignorance of *bonde* good form; because the *kona*, having heard your requirements in the first instance, has gone out into the kitchen to prepare for them as a matter of course. An old hand would have noted that, and avoided any second reference to the subject. The *mand sjölv* remarks, indifferently, that there "might be some *raad for det*" (means to that end), and proceeds to inflict upon you a very minute process of personal inspection. A *bonde* will never, under any circumstances, vouchsafe a direct answer either in the affirmative or the negative; and, "would," "could," "should," "might" and "ought" in all their exasperating conditionals and future potentials are as the very breath of life to him. This

is also a point of *bonde* etiquette, and is generally termed *bonde forsigtighed*, or peasant caution. The Herr Grosserer, however, calls it *bonde mistænksomhed* (peasant suspiciousness, or even cussedness), forgetting that his own Frue when ordering a pound of steak at the butcher's will invariably say "*det skulde være*," or, "it should be" a pound of steak.

You will now begin to feel decidedly uncomfortable at this apparent lack of hospitality, but being desperately hungry, not to say faint, you glance around the room for something whereon to seat yourself; and, as no one makes a sign, you sink into a chair in the middle of the floor. An old hand would have done so at once on coming in. The man himself, without removing his pipe (they have all got their hats on), will then ask you where that man (meaning yourself) is from. You tell him where you are from. He remarks "*jasaa!*" (indeed), but without any visible expression of surprise: among people inquisitive to a painful degree, and who are perfectly cognisant of each other's most intimate affairs, he probably knows all about you already. He then asks you what that man's name is, what his age is, what his condition, or lack of condition, is as regards a wife, what his native country is, his means of livelihood, and what his possible

views are as to his terrestrial future—he never troubles you about your religious denomination. You satisfy him on all these points to the best of your knowledge and ability, and under the almost palpable scrutiny of the other men, sitting about on beds, benches and stools, and everlastingly smoking. The women don't notice you at all—while there are any men about. And you must not notice them—while there are any men about. With the appearance of the *kona* and the daughter, with the longed-for food, your spirits begin to rise, and you seek to establish a better social atmosphere in the reeking room by addressing yourself to them in what you are pleased to consider an engaging manner. You could not have committed a greater mistake, a greater breach of *bonde* etiquette—as their half-scared looks and muttered acknowledgments bear out. You must never address yourself in a general way to the women while there are men in the room, especially in the presence of the man himself. If you are alone in the company of women you may talk to them as much as you like, and they will not be slow in talking back, and to your heart's content, for they are only too eager to hear the outside news—not overtly asking you, bear in mind, but casually, if insidiously drawing you, after the

methods of their sex. But it is a strong point of *bonde pige* etiquette never to repeat, never to tell; and if, as a *kona*, she should prove less reticent, it will not matter so much, for that virtue is of less value to her in the married estate. An old hand would not have made your mistake, nor will he commit the *faux pas* of openly acknowledging an acquaintanceship, however slight, however intimate, with any young woman in the room. *Bonde* etiquette has appointed a time for all such follies, and if you are a *bondegut*, and on courting bent, you will know that Saturday evening is the proper time appointed to call upon your *jente*. So you will please to bear in mind that however attractive the company of the women may be, and however flattering the knowledge may be that they will never give you away (if their men invariably will), you must transfer your conversation to the man himself, or any other man, as soon as he enters the room. A dreadful infliction this, as, beyond the topics of "wind and weather," as the women contemptuously term it, and your own personal peculiarities, the *mand sjölv* has absolutely no conversation at all. In the deadly *impasse* of intellect which such a disability is likely to set up, a person of ordinary intelligence feels impelled, at times, to shampoo his

head, or shriek aloud, as a last desperate precaution against certain and sudden dementia.

Your refection, which will almost invariably consist of coffee, waffle cakes, flat bread, cheese, and perhaps a tin of sardines from the *landhandleriet*, having been placed on a clean cloth on the massive general table, you draw up your chair and fall to with what zest you may under the eyes of the smoking and regardant crowd. The women stand by ready to fill up your cup on the instant of your emptying it; and the best possible return you can make to them for their kindly and persistent entreaties that you shall go on eating, is to do so, and eat and drink as much as you conveniently can. As a rule, the women will not participate in the ordinary meals of the day if a guest be present. They either take their places at the table when the men have finished, or retire to the kitchen with the crockery-ware, and have their meals there.

When, as a newcomer, you have broken your fast, and lit your pipe (it is not considered strict etiquette to apply for permission to do so), it will have gradually dawned on your mind that the apparent rudeness of your reception was really nothing more than a cloak for a natural shyness of disposition; which was, perhaps, as inevitable in its

way as the nervous man's habit of touching his nose, or the lobe of his ear, when passing an observant crowd, or the tobacco maniac's peculiarity, when taken conversationally unawares, of hurrying his pipe into his mouth in order to regain his lip control and self-confidence. Little by little you become conscious that your visit, far from being resented, is looked upon rather as an event of a pleasurable kind. Whatever shortcomings there might have been apparent were entirely due to your ignorance of *bonde* etiquette. The women will come in with their knitting and sit away in corners listening with veiled avidity to your rather florid recital of the wonderful "carryings on" of the great outside world; and you cannot sufficiently satisfy the men as to what that great world thinks about Noreg, their country—and themselves. If you are a close observer, you will notice that socially equal as they all absolutely are, and with all their affectation of placing you on the same level, there is nevertheless an air of deference in their manner of addressing you, which they have probably inherited from their forefathers, who extended the same respect to *skjalds*, or bards, when they also came to them from foreign lands—and improvised. If you remain for the night the *gjæste værelse*, or guests' room (the best room in the house), will be allotted

to you, and despite your protests, your meals, which are several grades better than their own, will be served to you separately, and on a cloth—which they never use except on very high occasions. And if you have succeeded in completely gaining his heart, the *mand sjölv* will, before you retire, and when the others have gone, beckon you into an adjoining room, draw down the blinds, lock the door, and, with an assumption of not quite remembering where they were, produce a bottle of *akvavit* and some glasses from a cupboard, and half-a-dozen bottles of beer from the cellar. There was really not the slightest occasion for all this melodramatic procedure; but the *bonde* is nothing if not secretive. Then, if ever the "skaal" system in all its original Viking terrors were any matter of doubt, it will not be so now. But the etiquette of the *bonde* is different. It does not square with that of the Herr Grosserer. The "skaal" of the latter was single-barrelled, so to speak; but that of the former is double-barrelled, and far more destructive in operation. The man himself fills a couple of diminutive wine-glasses with *akvavit*—for the sweetness, if not the cash value, of the liquor must be long drawn out—and likewise a couple of tumblers with beer. This done, he says, "*ja-ja, skaal, da*," and, without further parley,

tosses off the *akvavit*, and immediately drinks down the beer on the top of it; and you, with some memories of your first castor-oil, and subsequent cup of tea, do the same. On ordinary occasions of *bonde* good-fellowship the ceremonial is continued until the bottles are all empty, and the man himself and his friend decidedly full; but he is well aware of the Britisher's unaccountable prejudices against the alternative system, and will not press you unduly. He is not always very nice in the choice of the two drinks and their assimilative properties, and may possibly offer you port wine and stout. But here you will, as I have done, find some very cogent reasons for declining.

On the following morning, having thanked the household by shaking hands with every member of it, and—if you are in the more northern districts—vainly endeavoured to make them accept cash payment, you will go away with a fortified sense of the goodness which may prevail in the most humble surroundings. I have here stated the case as you will find it in the average *bonde* home, and in the ninety-nine you will stumble upon for every one of the *stor bonde*, or big *bonde* of means—or the home of the returned Norsk-American *bonde*, and the many show *gaards*, and posting stations along the beaten routes. There

are *bondes* and *bondes*, as there are *bonde* homes and *bonde* homes, but within the latter the same *skiks* prevail in a greater or lesser degree, and the big *bonde* of prosperous Österdalen, Telemarken and Gudbrandsdalen has the same ineradicable idiosyncrasies as his poorer brother of the water-soaked little western crevices. Some of these old *skiks* are as strange as they are quite unaccountable. I once sat down to table in a Bamble *gaard*, whereat a plate of *melke gröd* (a porridge of boiled milk and flour, eaten with castored sugar, cinnamon, and milk) was the staple dish. As I was rather hungry, and the *gröd* appetising, I incontinently asked for more—which was given me. The other guests appeared to have been more than satisfied with their first help, for I noticed that there was a small portion of the porridge left on each plate. I was afterwards informed that I had broken the Bamble *skik*, which ordains that you must not quite finish up the contents of your plate. This *skik* may have taken its rise from the fact that a second helping among a numerous company of diners would constitute a serious drain on the resources of a poor family. Now the fact that they had broken *my skik*, by seating me one of thirteen at that table was equally strange to them, and it left them quite unmoved when I explained it

to them in all its heinousness. In another western and very primitive valley the inhabitants walk into one another's houses with their hats on, and without salutation of any kind, and then—even as dogs—walk out again without wishing the inmates *god dag*, *farvel*, or *adjö*, or anything else. Two of these valley men meeting on a lonely mountain road will engage in conversation without any preliminary references to the day, and after some interval of gossip one of them will drift off, without excuse or any approach to a leave-taking. No disrespect is intended. They would comport themselves in the same way towards the Herr Grosserer did he come among them—which he will take precious good care not to do—for they know of no social degrees, and are simply what their Viking progenitors left them. Truly may it be said that the Norwegian *bönder* are of the most democratic class of people on earth. Nothing forms so permanent and interesting a topic of dinner-table conversation in the towns as these *bonde skiks*, and the peculiarities of the dialects. The latter are as numerous as there are valleys throughout the country, and are all founded on the ancient Norröna *maal* (language), the primeval idiom of Scandinavia.

The dietary of the *bonde* is frequent of indul-

gence, and more or less monotonous of kind. If we take a typical *gaard* in a more prosperous parish in Central Norway we will find that the meal hours and their courses are approximately as follows :—

Fastanbaattaa (from 6 A.M. to 6.30 A.M.)—
Coffee, smörrebröd, or syrup instead of butter.

Aabit (from 7.30 A.M. to 8.30 A.M.)—
Whey soup, water-gruel, a little dry smoked meat, or sausage, lobscouse, fish, or bacon ; coffee.

Dugur (from 11 to 12 noon)—
Barley-meal porridge and milk. (An hour's *lur*, or siesta.)

Middags Kaffe (from 12 to 1 P.M., after the siesta)—
Coffee and smörrebröd.

Non (from 3.30 P.M. to 4 P.M.)—
The same food as for *Aabit*, with coffee.

Kvelsmad (at 8 P.M.)—
Porridge and milk, and to bed at 10 o'clock or a little later.

Coffee, it will be noticed, is a feature with every meal; and oatmeal porridge the excep-

tion. Coffee is resorted to not only at the hours stated, but throughout the day, whenever the spirit moves any one to visit the ever-ready kettle. In this typical valley of 2923 inhabitants the annual consumption of coffee amounts to about 29,000 lbs.—without including the coffee bought outside the district. Say a little under 10 lbs. per head per man, woman, and child. Nevertheless, insomnia does not trouble the *bonde*, nor is he otherwise neurotic—in so far as the men are concerned.

The Norwegian *bonde*, then, to sum him up, is a big, rough, uncultured child of Nature, with a number of natural good qualities outweighing the few bad ones which this lack of culture has solely engendered. He has a particularly hard time of it wresting his scanty living from his stony or water-logged pastures, and his life, such as it is, is one dull, sordid existence of toil and brood, with no apparent opportunity of redeeming its hopelessness, and no gleam of comfort to hearten him in the struggle other than his unswerving religious faith, which he clings to most tenaciously in the face of all the newer and more disturbing tenets. Beyond that, there is nothing to improve him—cultured books he will have none of—no one to lead him, no local examples of chivalry and manhood as they are

understood in their noblest sense, to lift him above the petty envies and narrow-minded views of his caste. But the germ is there, deep down in that chilled old heart, as anyone may have noted who, having gained some measure of his confidence, and essaying to probe these depths by a word or two of sympathy and encouragement, has seen him lay his great crop head down into the voluminous sleeves of his shirt, to conceal his weakness. Had I the framing of his laws, I would enact that the conditions of primogeniture should contain a clause whereby he be made to produce a certificate of ordinary humane culture before he seats himself in the *höisœde* (seat of honour) of his father's *gaard*. It would be better for him, for his children, and above all for his women, who are as far removed from him in every self-sacrificing and noble quality as the *bymand* is centuries apart from him in all things. That there is a better, if not a good, time coming I am personally fully convinced; for with the emancipation of his country in 1905 a new spirit appears to have entered the frost-bound old heart; and I have really almost come to the conclusion that he is about to seize the opportunity and rise to the level of the occasion. His sons are more eager to enter the schools of agriculture, and are forming themselves into

associations that will keep them away from the seductions of itinerant and lawless *akvavit* hawkers, the too frequent open-air dance, and that general tendency to moral drift which marked him in the hooligan days of his youth. He, the *mand sjölv*, is likewise in greater evidence in the national Storthing, and if he could only devote a little study to the works of Spencer, and Mill, and learn that political and social economy were age-worn sciences while his forbears as yet went in skins, he would hold his own against the wiliest statesman that ever breathed. The stress of hard times has sent a number of his brothers to the coast, to take up better lands adjoining the towns. These brothers, in the second or third generation, being neither *bymœnd* in one sense nor *bönder* in another, are a colony to themselves, and proximate, if in a far smaller social and economic degree, to the British middle class and lower middle class. Without being unduly influenced by the town, beyond the necessary leaven of culture so long needed, and preserving that natural if less rugged independence of manner, and the sound physique bred of fjeld and fjord, they are a happy example of what might obtain were it possible to deal similarly with the far-away and

hopeless communities of the crevices. And these farms, which are within easy distance, by horse or steamboat, of the towns on the coast, may with justice be termed better-class farms.

CHAPTER XV

A DAY ON A BETTER-CLASS FARM

A SLIGHT rustling sound is conveyed to the subconscious mind—it might have been a mouse had I not known, subconsciously, that mice had no habitation with us—and I open my eyes to a mellow light in the far corner of the bedroom.

A face is illumined by it, and stands out bodiless and in soft relief against the surrounding darkness; the face of a young girl of some sixteen Norwegian winters, pretty and plump of contour, plaintive and sad in its sphinx-like repose, and encircled by a fluffy halo of straw-coloured hair.

She has just torn and lighted some strips of birch bark from the wood supply in the corner basket, and, kneeling by the stove, feeds the flame with splinters of resinous pine, or *tyri*. There is a complete absence of clatter in the subsequent piling of the birch faggots upon the blazing bark, the closing of the stove door, and the nice adjustment of its air-regulator. How

absolutely noiseless are these women-folk in their household avocations! There are some five or six pairs of wooden shoes of assorted sizes under the porch outside, but they are never brought into the house to disturb the peace. They are assumed, and kicked off, when it is necessary to go out, or in, but otherwise they lie there in their serried array from year's end to year's end, like the discarded footwear of pilgrims praying within. The little sphinx by the stove has probably come in shoeless, or in list slippers, and you may never hear the sound of her footfalls throughout the long day's run of her domestic duties.

She remains for some minutes crouched by the side of the stove, peering at times into its depths, or listening for indications of failing combustion; but her face has the same sad expression it ever bears when the thoughts are self-centred and non-speculative. She opens the door for a final inspection, nods approvingly at the satisfactory progress of affairs within, lays the match-box on the projecting iron shelf and is about to rise when I whisper:

"G'mor'n, Magnhild."

In an instant the mask-like features have flashed into vivid life. There is a gleam of strong regular teeth, dimples form in the smooth



INTERIOR, FROM A BETTER-CLASS TELEMARKEN FARM

pale cheeks, and the large blue eyes sparkle with animation and subdued mischief as she whispers back:

"G'mor'n. *Jeg gratulere Dem med dagen*" (Good morning. I congratulate you on the day).

"Hey? What is that—the day?"

"Your birthday. G'mor'n."

The face is withdrawn into the gloom. A door closes softly. She has gone.

My birthday! Why so it is. I had positively forgotten all about it; and—what is this? I must be getting terribly aged, not to say decrepit; for as I turn to the wall I am conscious of pain in every muscle and joint in my body. My very fingers seem to be rigid and are certainly aching; and as I pass my hands apprehensively over my face I am made aware that there are weals—it might be even blebs—upon the smarting palms.

I remember it all now. I have been digging potatoes for the last fortnight from eight o'clock in the morning until six in the evening, and no one can dig potatoes for half a day without the conviction that backs and palms were never designed by Nature for that pursuit.

I strike a match and glance at my watch hanging by a nail on the wall. It is half-past six—and therefore—time for—another snooze—

The subconscious one is aroused to cosy

warmth by a fairy touch on the bedclothes, a slight (and intentional) jar of crockery, and the unmistakable aroma of fresh-made coffee—without the chicory. I am alone. The blinds have been noiselessly raised, and the glorious light of a September morning's sun is flooding the little room.

Rising on my elbow I survey the contents of a napkinned tray on the table by the bedside. A porcelain coffee pot, large enough for a small family, a cup and saucer, sugar bowl, and cream jug to match—the latter filled with delicious fresh cream—a glass dish with butter made last evening, and a plate of white bread and *Kavring* (rusks). Likewise a picture postcard—evidently posted the day before yesterday, and surreptitiously withheld from me for this festive occasion. It treats of a young lady in a purple and spangled costume (presumably an angel) with the wings of a condor, and presenting a blue cornucopia filled to overflowing with silver and golden coin. On the reverse side of the card is my name and address, with hearty congratulations in respect of the day, and it is signed, like an affectionate petition, by "Pappa," "Mamma," "Thorvald," "Magnhild," and an obviously assisted signature which I make out to be that of the spoilt one of the house, little

Petronilla. On the large round table in the centre of the room there are other things which were certainly not there the night before; a tobacco jar in the guise of a miniature hogshead of wine, a paper knife with a carved handle, a briar-root pipe with amber mouthpiece, and a tiny embroidered pouch wherein to bestow my watch at night.

It is overwhelming! and I lie back on the pillow with closed eyes, wondering whether the emotions of the great one on whom the freedom of a city has been conferred in a golden casket and illuminated address could largely exceed mine at this yearly assurance of the freedom of the home.

With this and kindred pleasing reflections I am about to doze off again when I am aroused by the lowing of cattle close under the windows and the shrill cry of the *husmand's* son calling them to the hills, and—ah! the coffee.

Of all the foreign customs I have pined for in tea-drinking Britain, and didn't find, this cup of "home-made" coffee in bed is the most delightful. The English beverage in itself cannot compare with it. I have often asked the travelled Scandinavian why this should be so, and he has as often replied "For two reasons. First, you blend chicory with your coffee; and,

secondly, you grind your coffee too finely. The result is that you drink a quantity of grounds in suspension, and your 'coffee' is not coffee so much as chicory." A Norwegian peasant of the better class buys a high-grade coffee in the bean, unroasted. It is then roasted by instalments, and at night, in the stove or any fireplace, in a long-handled iron container, and the contents are emptied away from the dwelling rooms. Thus all unpleasant smoke and smell is avoided. The coffee is then ground, not too finely, and immediately before use. The coffee kettle is half filled with fresh cold water, in order that it may not afterwards boil over, and sufficient coffee for the requirements is put in. When the water comes to the boil it is kept boiling for four minutes. The kettle is then placed on one side of the hot range and the grounds allowed to settle. This is hastened and perfected by the addition of a tiny piece of dry, salted fish skin, and in a few minutes the coffee is ready for pouring—hot, clear, and brown as a berry, and as delicious as only Norwegian coffee may be. You didn't know about that tiny piece of dry, salted fish skin, did you, oh, my tourist, when you drank and be-praised your Norwegian coffee? Should that process be now objectionable an added lump of sugar will answer the purpose *almost* as well.

What havoc to be sure the association of ideas may sometimes effect! I remember a Norwegian State chemist telling an alarmed and indignant public through the columns of a newspaper that if they had never *known* that the three drowned, and unrecoverable, human bodies in the town reservoir were there the water would to all intents and purposes have been *just the same.*

Among the poorer peasantry the coffee grounds are not removed after the first brew, but are added to continuously for two or three days before the final residue is thrown out. This, of course, is not to be commended; but where means are prescribed, the household large, and coffee in constant demand throughout the day, a series of fresh brews would be simply ruinous. Now on the tea question the English housewife has the undoubted advantage over the Scandinavian *husmor.*

I have been often asked by the untravelled Norwegian why this should be so, and I have as often replied, "Because, as a rule, you use well-water. Then you pour your boiling water into a cold teapot from a kettle which has been a'boil more or less all day. Incidentally your teacups are ever cold, and you allow too long an interval for the tea to draw." I considered this information sufficient for the day, and said nothing to

him about the unnecessary little wire nose-bag which he hangs on the spout of his tea-pot under the mistaken conviction that the swallowing of a tea-leaf will produce grave consequences. Nevertheless, the consumption of tea is, notwithstanding a crushing duty, increasing by leaps and bounds. Curiously enough the Norwegian, contrary to English notions on the subject, usually puts milk into his tea and cream into his coffee. The peasant, for some unexplained reason, apart from his unbounded hospitality, has a quaint habit of filling your cup, and sometimes the saucer, to overflowing, thus leaving no vacancy whatever for the cream until you have drunk a portion of the *café noir*. *Café au lait* by the way, is practically unknown throughout the land. The old peasant custom of holding the sugar or sugar-candy between the teeth when drinking is slowly, and happily, dying out.

With somewhat of the foregoing notes and reflections in mind I have finished my *kaffe og kavring*, washed, dressed, made my bed, and tidied up the room.

Needless to say the last two tasks had fallen like bolts from the blue on the unsuspecting heads of the devoted household. No *mandfolk* (man) throughout the length and breadth of Norway, unless he were an *enebo*, or hermit, had ever been

known to do such a thing under any circumstances whatever. The little sphinx had been indescribably shocked. Mamma had thrown up her hands in amazed protest; and even stolid Pappa had eyed me furtively, and with apprehension, as who should say, "Young man, I should dearly like to pass my hands over your phrenological bumps." But I had stood my ground, as I have always done on similar occasions. I pointed out that it was a special patent of my own finding, designed to remove sleep from the eyes and to promote mental and physical activities for the earlier business of the day. I assured them, moreover, that it was an unqualified pleasure, and that to allow my patent to lapse now would be equivalent to foregoing my matutinal *kaffe* for ever. This saved me. I had been careful not to suggest that the work lessened the burden of their household duties. To have done so would have been fatal—besides it would not have been in accordance with the fact. Yet there was something in the eye of the sphinx that was not far removed from the gravest suspicion, and I am positively certain, though I had no actual proofs, that notwithstanding my adeptness the bed was always remade and the room always re-ordered before I retired for the night. Emboldened by my triumph I had in a

moment of rashness started out the next morning with a bucket for the purpose of filling my bath from the well. But here the ever-prescient one had anticipated me, and from an ambush behind the cow-house had darted out and taken the bucket from me. No, no, no! It would have to stop at that—the limit. It might be the custom in *my* country; but *my* country wasn't the only country in this world, *Gud ske lov!* (God be praised), and apart from that she wasn't going to have it.

She had put her foot down, unmistakably and uncompromisingly; and when a Norway maid puts her foot down nothing—not even a mouse—will induce her to shift it. I retired to my rooms, bucketless and crestfallen.

A pair of folding doors give into my *dagligstue*, or everyday room, and here I find the same comfortable and even temperature which is maintained in every up-to-date Norwegian house from late autumn until early spring. The stove is crackling merrily away in its corner, and there is a faint smell of *kongerögelse*, or incense, which the thoughtful sphinx has dropped upon its heated surface. This room, like the bedroom, and indeed all the rooms in the house, is panelled with varnished matchboarding, the ceilings white, with a pretty stencilled border

and centrepiece. The painted floors are absolutely draught-proof and practically devoid of carpets, short lengths of blue-and-white hand-woven matting taking their place. There are three windows to each of these two rooms, and all of them are fitted with green holland blinds and draped with lace curtains. There is a feeling induced by the low-silled windows which I have never been quite able to overcome after the breast-high bays of London town—a feeling as though one were always on the point of falling out of the house.

A large centre table, a ditto basket chair, a rocking-chair, six cane-bottom ditto, a corner cupboard, a piano, one large and rather ornate hanging lamp, a miscellaneous collection of flowers in bloom on the window-sills, a ditto, ditto of books (in, or out of, bloom) in a pitch pine bookcase, a gun, a fishing-rod, a collection of stuffed birds and a squirrel on corner brackets, and a few emotional subjects in oleograph on the walls, and there you have an inventory of effects which, God He willing, may never be disturbed in the lifetime of their present owner by auctioneer or bailiff's man.

I pass through the hall and out into the porch. A flapping sound overhead attracts my attention to the Norwegian flag on its staff in the apple

orchard, significantly waving in honour of a very insignificant occasion. Pappa, a portly gentleman with grizzled hair and beard and the spacious air of a Florentine noble (in his shirt-sleeves), is in the act of belaying the cords, and pauses to remove his hat and *gratulere* me *med dagen.* Simultaneously Mamma, Thorvald, and little Petronilla appear, as it were out of the earth, and repeat the formula, taking me by the hand. I make a little speech, as in duty bound, but it is of so confused and indeterminate a character that even little Petronilla is constrained to laugh ; and so the ordeal is at an end.

The seven small hornless cows have been already duly milked, and the content, in a huge can, is about to be driven into the town to the *meieri*, or public dairy, by Thorvald the first-born and heir. Magnhild, from the porch beside me, beckons to "Fram," an obese little cob of the usual drab-coloured Græco-Roman type, with hogged mane, flowing tail, and zebra-striped legs, and it comes up to the door, cart and all, and takes the slice of bread and lump of sugar gingerly from her hand—nuzzling at her pockets for more.

Then Thorvald, the living replica of Pappa, without the grizzled hair and beard and the spacious air, climbs into the cart and drives off.

His vehicle will be loaded up with similar cans, all filled with fresh milk, before he reaches town; for the neighbouring farmers have, by pre-arrangement, carried their supply to the roadside, where it is picked up by him on the way, and the empty cans are dropped at the appointed places on the return journey. To-morrow it will be somebody else's turn to do the rounds, and Mamma and the sphinx will carry the can out to the high road at a very early hour in the morning; and later on one of us will fetch back the empty can whenever the spirit moves us so to do.

Approaching winter has already breathed upon us for the first time last night, and the surroundings are white with the frost that heralds the final rains. In front of me, across the yard, is the auxiliary dwelling, or *bryggehus*, into which the family move when the spring ploughing begins, leaving the main dwelling, or *vaaningshus*, throughout the summer months to silence—and to me. This custom, which is pretty general throughout the country districts, has never quite appealed to my sense of the fitness of things. That the family should desert a roomy and comfortable home on the very threshold of summer for a, comparatively speaking, crowded and stuffy *bryggehus*, in order that the former may

not be desecrated by the soil and toil of the fields, has always struck me as being inadequate as an excuse, and I have ever shown my disapproval (both I and the cat) by clinging to the *vaaningshus* to the very last, the family good-naturedly assenting. When appealed to on the common-sense aspect of this custom, the sphinx, with that provokingly superior air of kindly condescension which transforms her for the time into an elderly matron of affairs indulging a spoilt child, has informed me that they looked upon summer as their hardest and most continuous working period, and that it didn't therefore much matter to them where they lived as long as they had the *vaaningshus* so bright and clean and cosy to *flytte* back into for the long winter holiday. They had moved in only yesterday, because the last of the potatoes will have been housed to-day, and it—well, it was my birthday.

On my right, forming half the irregular square of the *tun*, or farmyard, are the cowhouse, and the hay, corn, and straw stores : a sloping bridge leading to the upper floor, from whence the hay and straw are thrown ; and on this floor are also a space for chaff-cutting and threshing operations, and a special apartment into which the poultry retire with the first fall of the snows.

Beneath, the seven hornless ones are comfortably housed throughout the winter; and "Fram," the obese, and "Petter," the still more corpulent pig, have separate accommodations that leave nothing to be desired. A deep well, whose waters are never frozen in the coldest of winters, flanks the forage shed, and a small *stabur*, or store, for the household provisions, stands alone between the *bryggehus* and the former.

Immediately behind the *bryggehus*, in a semi-circular sweep to the right and left, is a forest of spruce and silver birch, which continues with more or less undulation until it is brought up in the far distance by a precipitous range of igneous rock; and behind the *vaaningshus*, where I am standing, are the tilled and pasture lands of the farm, a pretty park-like terrene with clumps of "weeping birch" and queer property-looking out-crops of rock—the whole sloping down towards the south, for the distance of a quarter of a mile, to the cliffs of a tideless fjord.

Pappa, the weather-wise, glances up at the vane on the flagstaff, shoulders his hoe, and marches off to the potato patch without further word or sign. But I know what the old gentleman's thoughts are about—ay, as well as though he were shouting them from the housetop. They are especially connected with myself and this

maddest of all lunatical actions that have marked me very England. That a man hailing from that asylum for beneficent cranks should undertake to plough, reap, mow, fell trees, and set and dig potatoes as a pastime, and for the mere exercise of his body, might be imaginable when considered in connexion with the aberration of the cold bath in winter; but that he should do these things without payment—absolutely gratis and for nothing: paying, moreover, for his own bed and board! Ye Gods, this was unthinkable! it was worse; it was action without any reasonable motive, and therefore lunatic. That settled it, so far as I was personally concerned; I could see it in his eye, and that of the collective household. Certainly Pappa had known of cases up country where men had worked for nothing—the women-folk at home, who slaved the year round for sheer food and clothing, were not of the category—but these men had done this thing for a sick and helpless neighbour whose produce had to be garnered (and who would do the same for them should occasion arise), and the motive and action were therefore Christian-like and neighbourly, and in some measure to be understood.

But here again I could plainly see that Pappa (apart from his hypothesis of insanity) had given me up as a sort of mentally defective conundrum;

for his practical and matter-of-fact eyes of the lightest blue would revert to mine at times with an expression of the most melancholy commiseration, the rest of the household, including little Petronilla, obviously concurring.

Now this potato patch lay amidst the most ideal surroundings imaginable. It was a patch by itself, on a hillside, with a southerly aspect, hedged in by rock and juniper, and shut away from the outside world by an encircling grove of towering pine. There were still some fifty yards, or more, of ten rows to complete before the field work for that year would be done. Certainly there were the turnips still to be gotten in, but there was no immediate hurry about them. A little premature frost or rain would not hurt them so much as it would the potatoes—as anyone must know who has had the misfortune to hoe them out of a frost-bound bed, or differentiate them from stones in a sea of mud. The turnips could wait—and the cows for them. Our task had hitherto been a weary and, for me, a peculiarly painful one; but we were now about to put in our last efforts, and on the up-grade too, which is easier than hoeing downhill; and our hearts were light at the prospect of a speedy completion of labour seemingly without end.

To each of us are allotted two rows—the

sphinx has cheerfully taken on four, during the absence of her brother—and with a preliminary sensation, as of convalescence from rheumatic fever, I fall into line with the others. There is a basket and a bucket some distance in front of each of us, and into the former the full-sized *magnum bonum* is thrown, the small tuber going to the bucket as the special perquisite of "Petter" the Corpulent. When the two receptacles are filled we carry them to the cart, wherein they are emptied, and driven in from time to time to the house cellar.

Our silence will be broken at twenty-minute intervals, mainly by Pappa, and less for the purposes of conversation than with the object of easing his poor back.

"Ja-ja," he will say, as one setting a period to some satisfactory line of thought, and straightening his body with difficulty. "This Lord Mayor of London now. I suppose he will be drinking champagne both day and night?"

As with the majority of his class, this subject of riches—especially the supposed superfluous riches of somebody else—is one of unending speculative interest, and in that connection the Prince of Wales and the Lord Mayor, for no defined reason, appear to take precedence over the multi-millionaire, or sovereignty itself.

No, I observe, I didn't think that his lordship *was* in the habit of drinking champagne for twenty-four hours at a stretch. As a matter of fact, I believed that the present holder of that office was an abandoned teetotaler, and hopelessly addicted to water. He might take that from me as proximate truth.

Pappa fills his pipe slowly and thoughtfully—he carries his tobacco loose in his waistcoat pockets; Mamma takes advantage of the spell of grace to re-adjust and retie her headkerchief; and the sphinx, who has beaten us by five yards (her extra task notwithstanding), is asquat on her basket, and as sphinx-like of expression as her Lybian prototype.

"Ja-ja," remarks Pappa, and there is not the least trace of conviction in his eyes, "it may be even so, as you say; but then he must be of a monstrous richness, and, you know, he must do *something* with his money."

Rose-cheeked Mamma sighs, looking down at her horny palms and wooden shoes, as wondering how much spot cash *she* would have got if this Lord Mayor had happened to be *her* husband. The sphinx's thoughts are apparently otherwhere, for I catch her eyes on their return journey from the distant high road, and she

blushes in a most unsphinx-like manner, not to say guiltily.

Pappa, having failed to draw me on the socio-economic position of the offensively rich, pockets his pipe with the usual unconvinced smile of a better knowledge, and again stoops to his task. We have been plodding along for about an hour and a half at this weary back-breaking work, when mamma says "Ja-ja," drives her hoe into the ground, and drifts off towards the *vaaningshus*. Good! It was the premonitory sign of breakfast and relief, and we fall to at our slashing, pulling, and groping in one last great spurt of failing strength.

Finally, little Petronilla appears on the top of a distant boulder, from whence she is in the habit of calling the cows, and cries "Kom!" and with a sigh of the intensest relief we drop our hoes, and follow her home.

CHAPTER XVI

A DAY ON A BETTER-CLASS FARM—*continued*

A BETTER-CLASS farmhouse, or rather villa, of modern Norway is a two-storied, timber-built structure, with a red-tiled roof and a covered porch in front. The cellar is formed by delving, or blasting, according to the nature of the site, and then by building up some three or four feet above the ground-line with solid stone masonry. The forming of these cellars often constitutes a heavy item in construction cost; but their solid and damp-proof properties are a *sine qua non* that cannot be ignored in a country of deep snows and heavy spring and autumnal rains. On this masonry the walls of stout logs are erected, the latter being securely mortised and tenoned at the corners, and the inner surfaces cemented and lined with moss to form a perfectly air-tight joint. The outside and inside of the walls are then match-boarded vertically, and the whole given a thorough coating of white paint.

In a house such as this dwelt Pappa—who, by the way with Mamma, has really only two

consonants to his Norsk child-name, though, for exactitude of pronunciation, I have deemed it expedient to give him three. When you pass through the porch you will find yourself in the *gangen*, or hall, with a short flight of stairs leading to the upper floor. On the right is a door opening into my two rooms, and to your left is a corresponding portal giving access to Pappa's dual apartments—a drawing-room, or *salon*, and a bedroom (occasionally used as an office) for the old couple. The upper floor, or *loft*, is divided down its entire length by a wooden partition. The stair-head half of this space is open to the tiled roof, in which a pair of sky-lights have been placed for ventilating and lighting purposes, and the room itself is used as a sort of general wardrobe for the entire household. There, beginning at the extreme end, you will find that each member has his or her allotted space along the match-boarded wall. Pappa leads off with an enormous wolfskin pelisse, a pair of spotted sealskin top-boots (of dimensions so monstrous that you might have safely stowed his little Petronilla away into either of them without any portion of her protruding), his best suit of clothes for Sunday and County Council occasions, three or four other suits for minor uses, and quite a museum of hats,

caps, scarves, and gloves. Thorvald comes next, with a display equally miscellaneous, if less imposing. I follow on, with a wardrobe which Mamma and the sphinx are pleased to consider dangerously inefficient for climatic requirements; and adjoining me are the habiliments of Mamma and Magnhild, and the doll-like vestments of the little Petronilla. But I may not expatiate unduly on that array of gowns, blouses, hats, and handkerchiefs, so chastely curtained in from profane scrutiny, and dust, by their immaculate draperies of brown holland, though it will be no breach of confidence to suggest that Mamma has no intention whatever of remaining outside the fashions, and that in her smart, black silk bonnet with its quivering complement of artificial herbage and fruits, her paletot of passementerie over a well-cut gown of dark serge, she is anything but a *quantité négligeable* at the little chapel on the hill-top. The sphinx has also her own self-contained notions as to what is required of her for town visits, and, although a marquise hat without a feather is somewhat of an anomaly, the deficiency has been more than met by a satin bow of ample dimensions and a gemmed buckle of apparently fabulous worth. This and a charming skirt of light blue cloth, a long jacket of a darker hue, and the indispensable light-figured

blouse, are more than sufficient to produce a very disturbing effect on a certain young person, who may appear at any moment from the distant high road.

Further along the wall is a tall clothes-press, within which the lavender-embalmed linens of the house are kept, and flanking it are a number of huge eighteenth-century trunks, the transmitted properties of pappas and mammas long since dead and buried. These trunks are gorgeously painted and ornamented with scrolled designs, and they bear the names of the original owners in long tendril-like letters of paint. They are now being used for their former purposes by the living members of the family, and on the principle, apparently, of the smaller the member the larger the trunk; for that allotted to Pappa is no bigger than a small cistern, and little Petronilla might have easily stowed both him and Mamma away into hers, and locked it. Lastly, under the window at the other end of the *loft*, is the stout oaken family cradle, which has rocked not only the youngest generation into the walking stage, but has actually dealt with no less a personage than portly Pappa himself, who, puling and sprawling in its interior, was probably less spacious and Florentine of aspect than might have been desired.

A door in the centre of the dividing partition gives into the retiring room of the sphinx and little Petronilla, a prettily ordered little compartment, with a dormer window, and a glorious outlook in summer over a perfumed sea of tossing meadow-bloom and the distant forest of brooding pine. Thorvald's room adjoins this. It contains his bed, table, chest of drawers, a number of framed photographs, a great deal too many tobacco-pipes, and in a corner, under a statuette of H.M. *Kong Haakon*, a cheap fowling-piece of Belgium make, which I should be exceedingly sorry to discharge under any circumstances whatever.

This plan of dwelling leaves nothing for cavil, nothing except one little drawback which Pappa fully acknowledges, but tacitly consents to its always remaining a drawback, because it happens to involve a *skik* which even the most enlightened of his caste have not yet dared to violate. I allude to the want of a light in the *gangen* on winter nights, owing to the lack of a glass panel in any one of the three inner doors. For some unexplained reason, beyond, perhaps, an inherent secretiveness of procedure—certainly not the cost of paraffin—a lamp is never under any circumstances placed in the hall. "Ja-ja," Pappa conditionally assents

with an easy air of good-natured condescension when I point out the dangers of a glacial hall and stairs in the Cimmerian darkness of a midwinter night, and the trifling cost of the remedial measure, "there might"—could, would, and should—"be something in that idea of yours, and there ought possibly to be found some means for carrying it out." But the innovation has always remained hung up in the future potenttials, or conditionals, and there it will always remain. Another curious instance of this lack of a sense of ordinary precaution is seen in the absence of sand, or sawdust, on the pavements of the towns during the slippery stages of winter. When the snows are in abeyance, and the so-called ice-winter prevails, it is practically impossible for the timorous to venture down some of their alpine streets otherwise than by clinging to doors, palings, and lamp-posts, like an inebriate. And on the farms the conditions are even worse; for there the yards are usually at a very steep angle of incline: so much so, indeed, that I have been often compelled to negotiate them on all fours, and by propulsory methods peculiar to the seal. Of course the universal town custom of wearing galoshes in winter mitigates the danger of accident to some extent; but this does not apply in the country, where no self-

respecting *bonde* ever thinks of falling, and his wooden shoes answer all purposes for indoor cleanliness of traffic. Pappa says that the *bönder* might, could, would, and even should complain that the sand laid down would tend to wear out the iron-shod runners of their sleighs, and counsels my wearing wooden shoes: this is of course impossible in the town, and it makes very little difference to me in the country, beyond the nature and degree of my fall—which is, as a rule, more sudden and impressive.

Mamma brings in my breakfast (she and the sphinx alternate in these duties) and lingers according to custom to impress upon me the dire necessity of my leaving no scrap, or drop, of it unconsumed, also requesting me as a particular personal favour not to be backward in applying for more. Now, as this meal invariably consists of a large plate of oatmeal porridge, a dish of fried bacon, a heaped platter of buttered *Fransk bröd* or French bread, and at least four imperial pints of fresh milk, she has only herself to thank if I do not always see my way to oblige her. The breakfast finished, and the usual ceremony of refusal undergone in respect of a proposed second course of cakes, cheese, and coffee I return with Pappa (who has breakfasted with the others in the kitchen) to the potato patch: Mamma and

Magnhild having duly washed, dried, and put away the breakfast gear, and left little Petronilla to take charge of the house, joining us shortly afterwards. It is now nine o'clock, the sun is beginning to make itself unpleasantly felt, and we have five solid hours of ceaseless work before us ere there will be any hope of rest and dinner. The time passes in much the same manner as heretofore. Occasionally a *bonde* farmer on a cross-country visit to town will deviate to wish us "god dag," and give us a longer spell of conversational ease than usual. But we keep at it doggedly, spell or no spell, and when at last Thorvald comes driving down the avenue of chestnuts we have reduced the virgin potato patch to more than half its original dimensions. Mamma has long since drifted off, and as the sphinx shortly afterwards disappeared, I am led to suspect that preparations for further emphasizing this wretched birthday of mine is not quite unconnected with the hiatus. Then Pappa fairly, squarely, and unconditionally throws up the sponge, and under the outrageous plea of wondering whether there would be any letters for him, seats himself on his basket in a collapsed state of expectancy. Eventually Thorvald comes up with "Fram" and our letters, and hitching the former to the cart drives the first load of

potatoes to the cellar. Pappa follows, ostensibly to help house them, and leaning on my hoe I complacently await their return. But they do not return. So I seat myself on my basket to read my letters and await further developments. They arrive, almost immediately, in the guise of little Petronilla, who presents me with an apple and a ginger-bread cow, and says "kom!" and I follow her home.

To enumerate all the courses, semi-courses, and courses from by-products (to say nothing of their ingredients), which mamma and the sphinx place before me with implacable zest, calling it merely "middag," would be altogether too fatiguing to my readers. How it may be accomplished under the running strain of their field labours is indeed one of the wonders with which these wonderful women inspire one. Pappa, Thorvald, and I are only too glad of an opportunity to throw ourselves down for an interval of rest during food preparations, but the women, apart from a short siesta, broken into by the duties of clearing away and washing up, never rest for a moment in the course of their day's toil. The sphinx, in an unguarded moment of confidence, quite unusual with her, opines that women are more supple and pliable of body in the niggling and blood-to-the-head operations of potato-

setting and digging, and the reaping and binding of corn. Men, she adds, with that provoking air of responsible matronhood, which immediately transforms me into a child to be minded, are more adapted for *heavy* work.

Mamma commences operations by placing before me a soup of boiled rice and milk, with a flavouring of raisins, sugar, and cinnamon. Now as this is obviously a sweetmeat, ranking with puddings and their kind, I beg that she will be good enough to place it on the side-table for possible future dealing. This she does with the usual protests of amazement, and gives place to the sphinx, with a reserve plate of mutton broth, with its usual concomitants of barley and turnip. This is decidedly good: if not sufficiently alluring to warrant Mamma's vehement desires that I shall have another helping. For I know from unhappy experience that there must be some allowance made for later unexpected developments from the kitchen. Mamma bustles off with a sigh of despair, and returns with a very large sirloin of beef on a very small dish: little Petronilla solemnly following—as a special birthday concession—with the gravy in a sauceboat. It is a particularly tender and succulent joint, and it has been done to a turn. Of course there is very little yellow fat about it, as there seldom

is outside of England, and owing to the butcher's peculiar ideas of jointing the exact site of the undercut is rather a matter of doubt. But it will serve; and Mamma, delighted beyond measure at the well turned compliment, departs chuckling, and leaves me to my joint, and my cabbage, and my potatoes, and my caraffe of water from the well, in peace. Later on the sphinx bears me in an immense plate of *römmegröd*, which she places before me with all the bland dignity of a Ritz waiter: departing with the remains of the previous course, and a half-suppressed reminiscent smile. That half-suppressed reminiscent smile has its history. It has to do with my culinary operations in respect of a joint which I undertook one day to roast in the presence of the entire household, after the manner in which we roast our joints in England. It was a great day. In fact a red-letter day, and never shall I forget the sphinx's uncontrollable, if rather opprobrious mirth when I discarded all that nice superficial fat from the baking pan in favour of a little hot water, flour and salt: a flagrant loss of opportunity which had an almost hysterical effect on Mamma, and sent Pappa and Thorvald into the *salon*, ostensibly to laugh.

Now, this *römmegröd*, or sour cream porridge, is a national dish, a very satisfying dish, and a

rich one, withal: but to the bilious it is not to be commended. The sour cream with the addition of some flour, is boiled, and stirred continually while boiling, until the butter product rises to the top. The butter is then skimmed off and served separately as a sauce: the *gröd* itself being eaten with the usual accompaniments of milk, sugar and cinnamon. Great care is taken that the *gröd* shall be continuously stirred during boiling, otherwise the result, whatever else it may be, will certainly not be *römmegröd.* The dish is an old acquaintance, if not a very intimate friend of mine, and I partake sufficiently of it (without the sauce) to allay, in some measure, Mamma's sorrow, when she puts her head in at the door to note progress and inquire if I will have some *lefse.* I reply, "No,"—courteously, if decidedly, "No,"—but if she will without undue trouble, be so good as to convert that comestible (I had nearly written combustible) into a pancake, I would be very happy to have dealings with it. This *lefse* is likewise a national food, and about the most primitive of its kind as you will ever meet with in the proverbial day's march. It is really nothing more than a dough of flour and water, rolled out more or less thinly—and served. The surface is then coated with margarine, or sugar, or treacle, and the dough (rolled up, like a

small petition) is held in the hand and eaten as a jam roll is occasionally devoured by our London waifs. It is a common enough food in the uplands, and I have found it very useful in the pocket when there was any prospect of getting lost among the fjelds; for its staying, or rather intimidatory powers are almost up to the standard of the *gjed ost*. But it must not be kept unduly, or it will take unto itself the appearance of old parchment, and the consistency of shellac. I have at the moment of writing, upon my bookshelf, a thin volume in folio, made entirely by myself, beautifully (if apparently) leaved, bound and tooled, and it bears the title in old black letters: "Mr William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, and *Tragedies*." But it is nothing more than *lefse*, as anyone would find out who dropped it. And that is the reason why Mamma is always tentative in her inquiries in respect of *lefse*.

Pappa comes in with the gracious dignity of a Lorenzo de' Medici (covertly chewing) to inquire if I am wanting anything. I reply, not just now I thank him, and he retires, to continue forth-on with all his courses, exhaustively, and—as a matter of course.

The pancake arrives duly, neatly rolled and perfect of cooking and ingredients—if a little

before its time; for it is immediately followed by some bacon and eggs, a blanc-mange, a fruit-jelly, and some smörrebröd. But I have long since reached the mere tasting stage of progress, and if Mamma attributes this to symptomatic evidences of a malignant fever, or premature decline, I really cannot help it. I have no other means beyond empty compliment of assuaging the poignancy of her griefs. Little Petronilla is ushered in with an over-full glass of currant wine (Mamma's own concoction), and the lisped message that Pappa, Mamma, Thorvald, Magnhild, and herself, say "*skaal da.*" Which practically sets a period to the dinner. For the coffee, cheese, and biscuits, which follow are looked upon more in the light of a satellite meal, or no meal at all.

A lowing in the *tun* calls attention to the fact that the *husmand's* boy has brought the cattle home for housing while he has his dinner, and takes his *middags lur*, or after-dinner siesta. Magnhild goes out to the porch to give them greeting, and the oldest cow, who has known her since she was quite a little tot, comes up and lays her great head down with a gust of satisfaction on the sphinx's shoulder. How great is this affection as between these big lumbering creatures and the tiny fragile maid no one may

ever gauge. I can only vouch for the fact that when sickness or old age ordained that one of these dumb ones should be removed, the unrestrained griefs of the sphinx and little Petronilla were most piteous to witness, and do or say what we might, they would not be comforted. And the dumb ones are no less cognisant of this affection, and are not slow in evincing their gratitude for a lifetime of constant attention. There is an authenticated story relating to a little *husmand's* boy, who had fallen into a lake and been drowned while herding his master's cattle, and the fact being brought to the knowledge of his *bonde* master, when, alarmed by their prolonged absence, he searched for and found his cattle knee-deep in the lake lowing piteously to the little drowned one to come out and take them home.

There is quite a human look of recognition in the stolid eye which Magnhild's old favourite rolls up at me, as I stand looking down at her from the window: a look that almost seems to convey, "Ja-ja, I know all about *you*, too. I have been fostering you for a greater number of years than I care to think about, and I earnestly trust that I may never live to have any occasion to regret it."

Tired as we undoubtedly are, notwithstanding the recuperative results of our *lur*, we all set to

with a will to finish up the remaining portion of our task. The sun is now more than uncomfortably hot, and Mamma, noticing our conditions, sends the sphinx over to the *Vaaningshus* under whispered orders. Thorvald is now of our party, and quite a gang in himself; but he will never catch up with his sister, who has an exasperating way of forging ahead without the least approach to effort, or exultation. She returns presently with a bottle of bilberry juice and a jug of spring water fresh from the well, and little Petronilla brings tumblers. We all drink a mutual "skaal" in this most delicious of drinks that a thirsty person might desire, and I note the Norseman's peculiar method of drinking—as I have done before many a time and oft—wondering as to the reason of it; for, however thirsty he or she may be, he never, as with us, takes a long drink, finishing out the contents of the glass, or cup, at a draught, but always in little sups, or gulps, of measured quantity, shaking up and tossing off the ultimate contents like a prescription.

We are about to commence work again when a covey of blackcock and greyhen sweeps by us out of the woods and clatters into a birch tree, some sixty yards from the *Vaaningshus* windows. Thorvald exclaims, "*Hei, san!*" drops his hoe, and essays to reach the house, and his gun, by a

circuitous and covered route. But he is too late. They have noted his movements, and are gone. Pappa remarks, "Ja-ja—ja-ja:" in which sentiment we all sympathetically concur. There are a number of squirrels about, running along the top of the boundary fence, or scolding at us from the safer retreat of aspen and oak. At times the great black, red-crested woodpecker will drop silently down at the foot of a dead pine bole, and hammer its way almost to the top before it notes our presence, and as silently departs. The smaller species, of a light green, is less shy, and will remain watching us from a tree top for quite a long while, before it dives with its piercing "Hja-hja-hja-hja," into the recesses of the forest. Jays, singly or in couples, appear from time to time on a wooded knoll, and emulate the discordance of their cousins, the magpies. The latter are always in, or about, the farm, winter and summer; and although they are the most shameless of thieves when food in winter is scarce, they always look upon themselves as being *de facto* participants in our home life. The crows, being in a sense outlaws, maintain a much safer distance, and they are as difficult to approach, with a gun, as a fieldfare, or a wood-pigeon. They are grey-backed, and a smaller species than that of England, and are much

less numerous. Foxes abound, and are a constant source of anxiety to Mamma : snatching her poultry in the middle of the *tun*, ay, and in the broadest of daylight.

The setting sun sees us steadily at our labours, and the shadows of night are beginning to creep down from the fjelds when the sphinx completes her two rows, and returns to her Pappa to relieve him of one. We arrive at the end of our wearisome journey one after the other according to our several degrees of skill, and throw ourselves down on a bank of fern with a heartfelt "*Gud ske lov!*" With the exception of the turnip-pulling (which is quite an inconsiderable task) some tree-felling, log-driving, and the light duties of chaff-cutting and corn-threshing, there will be no more field work to vex us until spring-time doth draw near.

Arrived at the house with the last waggon-load of potatoes, and all our paraphernalia of work, we find the cows safely housed for the night, and the *husmand's* boy playing "Hop Scotch" with little Petronilla in the uncertain light of the *tun*. Mamma and Magnhild repair at once to the *fjöse*, or cowhouse, for milking necessities, leaving the *mand* folk to change their soil-stained clothes and make themselves presentable for the evening. Unlike their brethren of the interior the

better-class farmers prefer quantity and quality to the many scant and coffee-diluted meals which prevail amongst the former; and Mamma has unbounded faith in the virtues of oatmeal porridge, meat soups, and milk and eggs. My supper this evening is of the same nature which it has ever been in this little out of the way Vestland home —an immoderate supply of fresh, warm, and duly strained milk from my foster-mothers of the *fjöse*, a large white loaf of Mamma's baking, and a plate of butter of the sphinx's own churning. Later in the evening, as I am deeply immersed in the chaste account of a Fifth Avenue wedding-feast as set forth in the columns of a home paper, little Petronilla appears suddenly before me, like a small spectre, and presenting me with three peppermints and half a pear, says "Kom!" And I follow her into the *salon*.

They all receive me upstanding, and not without a certain natural dignity, and usher me into the *höisæde*, in this instance the sofa, and Pappa fills up a number of little wine-glasses from the bottle of red-currant wine, which he keeps in an old oak and iron-bound hanging cupboard. I apologise for my dereliction in forgetting the occasion, and the bottle of old port wherewith to mark it, and promise to be less thoughtless on the following anniversary. Mamma says it is

of no consequence whatever, as the red-currant wine is quite good enough for them, if I will take it *tiltakke* (make the most of it). They all, including little Petronilla, drink "skaal" to me, and we then seat ourselves to pass the evening in the way they are in the habit of passing it when I am not present. For Mamma well knows that I would be more than *beklempt*, or ill at ease, were they to put themselves to any unusual deviations on my account. Therefore, Mamma goes on carding her wool by the stove, the sphinx goes on spinning it in the corner, little Petronilla takes up the thread of her last flirtation with me, Thorvald takes down his "Oliver Twist" from its shelf, and Pappa, saying "*undskyld*," puts on his spectacles and turns his attention to his diminutive local paper. And he goes steadily through all its columns, and with all the same plodding devotion with which he followed the rows of his potato-patch. There is no editorial, in our sense of that word. The sheet leads off with two columns of "Sunday Thoughts" — usually a sermon — and generally follows on with a column and a half of such absorbing subjects as "Top-dressing," or a dissertation on the proper treatment of cows during the calving season. "Foreign news" comes next—mostly from Berlin sources—and

if the international state of affairs is likely to involve Norwegian interests, the *Herr Redaktör* will have some short and pungent comments to add at the foot of the column. "Local News" figures next, and is devoured by Mamma during some rare Sunday interval of inactivity. A half column or so is usually devoted at the end of the second page to some phenomenal abnormity within the four corners of the United States; such as the birth of a cat with five legs, a hen with two heads, or a dog with none to speak of. It is scarcely the kind of paper about which young people would quarrel on a point of precedence in perusal. Nevertheless when Pappa is quite through with the reading matter and all the advertisements, the sphinx will emerge from her corner and cut out the feuilleton at the bottom—generally speaking, a translated English serial — and put it away with the preceding numbered pages for reading and binding. But she has also her own paper—a monthly one—and so have Mamma and Thorvald; and in this connection it will be interesting to note what class of paper is read by the average *bonde*, and to what extent journals are in permanent demand. Taking Meldalen as a typical *bygd* (not particularly in touch with any town), Doctor E. Stören tabulates the results of his researches as under :—

Class of Paper.	Per 100 Inhabitants.
Comic	1.5
Wit	0.2
Popular knowledge	0.2
Missions, religious	3.5
Temperance	0.9
Dialect	1.2
Women's suffrage	0.0
Youths	1.7
Children	3.2
Sport	0.2
Newspapers	13.8
Agricultural	0.9
House and home	0.1
Fashions	0.4

It will be noted that papers dealing with women's suffrage are a minus quantity. This can hardly be otherwise, for the *bonde* wife will, as a general rule, vote (when she votes at all) as her *mand* votes, and the great majority of unmarried peasant girls are, owing to the poverty of the country, outside the cash standard of qualification. If their social condition is to undergo any betterment—and I have previously given some cogent reasons for such a desirability—the succour must come from without, from their sisters of the towns, who having now attained their heart's desire will doubtless crown their

achievement by turning their attention to, and throwing some light of happiness into, the dark corners of the uplands.

Mamma ceases carding her wool to insist that I shall partake of her *fattig mands bakkelse* (poor man's pastry), pointing out that birthdays do not occur every day—at least they ought not to in so far as Nature and the individual are concerned. I promise that I will do so if she will furnish me with the recipe; for this is really a pastry which one ought to know something about, seeing that it is as popular in the towns among every class as it is in the country. Mamma forthwith provides me with the recipe, which I note down and herewith transmit: 18 eggs, 2 lbs. of flour, 1 lb. of butter, a couple of small wine-glasses of cognac, some cinnamon finely ground, 2 lbs. of sugar, and some baking-powder. Mix all the ingredients thoroughly, roll out very thinly, cut into little circular cakes and fry in a deep pan of pork dripping or lard until of a light golden brown. You will find these cakes everywhere, especially during Christmas and Easter holidays, and the Herr Grosserer's Frue will usually offer *fattig mands bakkelse* when wine is brought in.

The sphinx suddenly stays her spinning-wheel. She has heard something. No one else has. I

have not. She has, like all her Norwegian sisters, the ear and eye of a lynx—though you would probably not think so looking at her. The door opens, and a young man, a seafaring young man, and in an obvious suit of Sunderland reach-me-downs, enters and wishes us *god morgen*. He comes forward very much *embarrassée de sa personne*, and shakes hands with us all in turn, including (with a futile assumption of afterthought) the sphinx. Mamma places a chair in the centre of the room, on which he seats himself well forward, as on a sea chest, depositing his cap for better security underneath it. Pappa, laying aside his paper, succeeds in extracting the three following points of information: that this young man's barque had arrived this morning, that he had been paid off, and that not having anything better to do (here he had blushed furiously under somebody's reproving eye) he thought he might just as well call up at the *gaard* and pay his respects. The sphinx has substituted her knitting for the spinning-wheel, and has moreover found a new place, in another corner, more or less behind us all: probably with a view to getting as far away as possible from this very casual young man, or possibly, though I do not vouch for it, that she may be in a better position to observe

somebody without herself being generally observed.

The conversational stores of this young man bashful are soon thoroughly depleted, and after an hour's interval of continuous and deadly silence, he gets out his cap from under the chair, dusts it thoughtfully, is about to assume it, doesn't do so, and then, with an appealing look into the corner, says "Ja-ja." Thereat the sphinx glides noiselessly from the room, and the young man, after some decent interval has elapsed, wishes us all *god nat* and follows her. Pappa fetches his long meerschaum pipe from the rack by the stove, and is about to fill it when the door slowly opens, and a cadaverous, ill-shorn face, with jetty eyes and hair, is thrust into the room, and wishes us "god morgen" (this salutation is current at any hour of the day or night.) Pappa again rises and orders it to come in. It does so, revealing a connective body, clothed in rags, and it is followed by a sallow-faced woman with a baby in her arms. These are *Taters*, or foreign gipsys; who are not above a comfortable night's lodging under a roof, when the baby is sick, and it is known (by mysterious runes on gate-posts) that Pappa will not turn them from his door. Pappa lights a lantern, and, having extracted a promise from these homeless ones that they will not,

under any circumstances, use a naked light on his premises, invites me to accompany him, and we conduct our visitors into the *bryggehus*. Here they are given a comfortable shake-down of straw, and told to pass the night in peace: Mamma coming in shortly afterwards with a substantial supper, and her assurance that they shall have a cup of coffee and some *smörrebröd* in the morning before they leave.

Returning to the *salon*, we are surprised to hear the clock striking nine—an hour when, under normal circumstances, we ought to have been in bed; for the horse, and the cows, and "Petter" the Corpulent require very early attention. The sphinx, who has seen her nautical young man well off the premises, and even as far as the distant high road, is again seated at her spinning-wheel, and again I can almost swear to the covertly defiant toss of the little tow-head, conveying the fact that she has found time, during my temporary absence, to remake my bed and re-order my room. Thorvald, who has got as far as the murder of Nancy, puts away his book with a vague look at me as though I, of my London experiences, were in some way morally responsible for it. Mamma goes off into the next room, to pull out her telescopic bedstead, with the bedclothes piled atop, and order

them for the night; and little Petronilla, who has fallen asleep in the rocking-chair, wakes up suddenly with the unwonted bustle, and staring somnolently at us all in turn, says, "Kom, nu, Magnhild!" whereupon the latter, with her bright early-morning smile, says "God nat, da," to me, and takes her little sister upstairs to bed. Pappa, who has already divested himself of his coat, wishes me "god nat," with the genial courtliness of a "Magnifico" conferring a charter; Mamma says "Ja, god nat, da," and smilingly adds, in my own idiom, "Slip vel"; and Thorvald, with the murder of Nancy and my moral responsibility for it obviously preying on his mind, says, "Ja-ja—god nat, da," and, removing his shoes, betakes himself to his upstairs room, and bed. Finally, I also retire, full of bodily aches and pains, to the solitude of my bedroom.

The stove is crackling right merrily under the sphinx's thoughtful ministrations, the night is chilly, and from my window I can see the fjordal mists rising like incandescent wool under the beams of the full moon. The scene is sufficiently ethereal, not to say transplendent, to tempt me to open the casement and lean out in moody contemplation. Many and miscellaneous are the sounds that are borne to the ear by the pure, fresh

airs of the night, but they come from afar and are in no sense disturbing; the roar of a distant waterfall mingles with the muffled boom of combers breaking upon a rock-bound coast, the bark of a dog on some mountain farm, the shriek of a fox, or the hoot of an owl from the deeps of the forest, and, in the near distance, the beat of "Fram's" restless hoofs in his stall, and the smothered drone of "Petter" the Corpulent fatly slumbering. Then, as the moon swings up over the fjelds, and, with a change of the wind, these sounds die down and cease, a window is opened above me, and a young girl's voice, tremulous, fresh, so rarely sweet, softly croons into the chills of the night the seldom lament of the young peasant heart communing direct with Nature: the burden that has been caught into the score of a few only of Norway's gifted sons: the embodiment (who shall say?) of centuries of sorrows bravely met and mutely borne. Even with the last note, as of tears suppressed—hidden under the mask of a sphinx—the voice is hushed, the casement is closed, and, with a shift of the wind, the rumble and roar of distant waters essay to carry on the sad refrain. The moon, in its progress, takes up fjeld after fjeld in cold, impartial review, revealing their wooded flanks and snow-laden tops, even as we shall see them

in some happier dream : silvering the seas, lakes, torrents, and glaciers, and peering down, as of commiseration, into the sombre crevices where the forgotten ones lie, sleeping.

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